

## **Evaluating Ethical Responsiveness in Police Services Through Public Complaints: A Virtue Ethics Case Study at Polda Metro Jaya, Indonesia**

**Rinaldi Hastomo<sup>1\*</sup>, Chryshnanda Dwilaksana<sup>2</sup>, Maria Puspitasari<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1,2</sup>Ilmu Kepolisian, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Kepolisian, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Sekolah Kajian dan Stratejik dan Global, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia

\*Corresponding Author E-mail: [rinaldihastomo@stik-ptik.ac.id](mailto:rinaldihastomo@stik-ptik.ac.id)

### **Abstract**

This study investigates the ethical dimensions of police public service delivery at the Integrated Police Service Centre (SPKT) of Polda Metro Jaya, focusing on the persistent gap between procedural compliance and ethical responsiveness. The research aims to identify the root causes of weak ethical implementation and to propose reform strategies grounded in virtue ethics. Employing a qualitative case study design, the study draws on data collected through in-depth interviews with officers and service users, 28 days of participant observation, and document analysis of police regulations and standard operating procedures. Thematic analysis was used to interpret recurring patterns in service behaviour and institutional culture. The findings reveal that while officers fulfil administrative requirements effectively, their interactions with the public often lack empathy, attentiveness, and moral judgement. Structural constraints, legalistic SOPs, and the absence of virtue-based training contribute to the erosion of ethical service culture. The study argues that the core issue is not regulatory deficiency, but the underdevelopment of moral character among police personnel. As a contribution to both theory and practice, the research introduces a comprehensive virtue ethics-based reform framework encompassing leadership, training, organisational culture, and procedural revision. The originality of this study lies in its explicit application of Aristotelian virtue ethics as a corrective model to address ethical stagnation in police service—a perspective rarely explored in Indonesian public administration scholarship.

Keywords: Virtue ethics; police services; public service ethics; character formation; SPKT Polda Metro Jaya.

### **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini mengkaji dimensi etika dalam pelayanan publik kepolisian di Sentra Pelayanan Kepolisian Terpadu (SPKT) Polda Metro Jaya, dengan fokus pada kesenjangan antara kepatuhan prosedural dan responsivitas etis. Tujuan utama dari penelitian ini adalah mengidentifikasi akar lemahnya implementasi etika serta merumuskan strategi reformasi berbasis etika kebajikan (virtue ethics). Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan petugas dan pengguna layanan, observasi partisipatif selama 28 hari, serta telaah dokumen regulasi kepolisian dan prosedur operasional standar (SOP). Analisis data dilakukan secara tematik untuk mengidentifikasi pola perilaku dan budaya institusional. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa meskipun petugas mampu memenuhi prosedur administrasi secara efektif, interaksi dengan masyarakat kerap minim empati, perhatian, dan pertimbangan moral. Hambatan struktural, SOP yang legalistik, serta tidak adanya pelatihan berbasis karakter turut memperlemah budaya pelayanan yang etis. Penelitian ini berargumen bahwa inti persoalan bukan terletak pada kurangnya regulasi, melainkan pada rendahnya pembentukan karakter moral dalam kultur profesional kepolisian. Sebagai kontribusi teoritis dan praktis, penelitian ini menawarkan kerangka reformasi berbasis etika kebajikan yang mencakup dimensi kepemimpinan, pelatihan, budaya organisasi, dan revisi prosedur. Keaslian penelitian ini terletak pada penerapan eksplisit etika kebajikan Aristotelian sebagai pendekatan korektif terhadap stagnasi etika dalam pelayanan kepolisian—sebuah perspektif yang masih jarang dijelajahi dalam studi administrasi publik Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: Etika kebajikan; pelayanan kepolisian; etika pelayanan publik; pembentukan karakter; SPKT Polda Metro Jaya.

## INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of ethical crisis in public service in Indonesia has once again surfaced with the release of 2023 data from the Indonesian Ombudsman (2023), which recorded 26,461 complaints related to the quality of public services, with 7,909 reports having been addressed—approximately 40.38 percent of which were associated with allegations of maladministration. The most common forms of administrative misconduct included failure to provide services, excessive delays, and procedural deviations—practices that reflect the ongoing weakness in bureaucratic adherence to principles of fair and efficient service delivery. Although there has been a significant increase in the number of institutions classified within the green zone in the Public Service Compliance Assessment, 6.64 percent of service providers remain in the red zone, indicating low levels of compliance. These findings highlight a stark disparity between the ideal of service-oriented governance and its practical implementation, which risks deepening public distrust, particularly among vulnerable groups.

The ethical crisis within public service is particularly acute in the realm of law enforcement. The 2024 Ombudsman RI Report (2024) documents 595 public complaints specifically related to breaches of the police code of ethics, SPKT (Integrated Police Service Centre), and broader policing practices. Complementing this, quantitative data from the Professional and Security Division of the National Police Headquarters reveals that between 2021 and 2023, thousands of ethical violations were committed by members of the Indonesian National Police (Divisi Propam Mabes Polri, 2024). The peak occurred in 2022, with 1,936 recorded violations spanning institutional, social, and personal conduct domains. Further supporting these concerns, Kompolnas data from 2023 reports 1,981 complaints against police services, involving issues such as poor service quality, discriminatory behaviour, and abuse of authority (Kompolnas, 2023). These figures reflect a systemic deficiency in ethical governance within police institutions and reinforce the urgent need for reform grounded not only in regulatory compliance but also in moral and institutional transformation.

Previous studies on public service in policing can generally be categorised into three main areas. The first group comprises research focusing on public satisfaction with police services, emphasising the effectiveness of systems and procedures, as seen in the works of Tinggogoy et al. (2020) and Wulan et al. (2022). These studies tend to assess service performance based on administrative efficiency, without adequately considering ethical or relational dimensions. The second category includes studies addressing the ethical aspects of public service, though these often remain limited to discussions of normative breaches and do not sufficiently explore the deeper principles of virtue ethics, such as those examined by Maile et al. (2023) and Pickett & Ryon (2017). These works stop short of examining moral character formation in police practice. The third group involves studies on digital policing services, such as online police applications in China, which predominantly highlight technical performance and accessibility while overlooking the ethical limitations of such systems (Wang & Teo, 2020). Additional studies have explored officers' internal perceptions and attitudes towards performance and service (Nordgren et al., 2022; Singh, 2016), yet they fail to provide a comprehensive analysis of the ethical implications of police conduct and interaction. The key limitation across all three categories is the absence of research that explicitly employs virtue ethics as the central analytical framework in evaluating police ethics. This gap underscores the need for a study that positions moral character, empathy, and practical wisdom as foundational to improving service quality—not merely as a matter of procedural compliance, but as an ethical vocation.

This research aims to fill the gap identified in previous studies by explicitly adopting a virtue ethics framework to evaluate police service ethics at the SPKT of Polda Metro Jaya. While earlier research has primarily focused on procedural efficiency or normative breaches, this study provides a novel contribution

by examining how moral values—such as empathy, integrity, and practical wisdom—can be integrated into service delivery. Specifically, the research seeks to identify the root causes behind the weak implementation of ethical principles in SPKT’s handling of public reports and to formulate character-based reform strategies that can support the realisation of inclusive and human-centred justice. By shifting the analytical lens from rule compliance to moral formation, this study proposes a policy framework grounded in virtue ethics as a foundation for transforming police service culture. The goal is not only to improve service performance, but also to strengthen institutional legitimacy by upholding the dignity and rights of all citizens, particularly those most vulnerable.

The central argument of this study is that the ethical deficiencies observed in SPKT police services are not merely the consequence of procedural gaps or regulatory shortcomings, but are primarily rooted in a deeper problem: the absence of moral habituation within institutional and professional culture. Drawing on Aristotelian virtue ethics, this research hypothesises that the internalisation of virtues—such as empathy, integrity, and *phronesis* (practical wisdom)—is essential for fostering ethical responsiveness in public service. In contrast to rule-based (deontological) or outcome-driven (consequentialist) ethics, which emphasise compliance or results, virtue ethics asserts that ethical excellence (*aretē*) arises from the consistent cultivation of good character within supportive environments (Crossan et al., 2013; Hacker-Wright et al., 2020). In the context of policing, this means that without institutional structures that promote moral development, officers are likely to revert to mechanistic, impersonal behaviours that satisfy procedural standards but fall short of ethical engagement. This hypothesis also aligns with the theory of the “norm–practice gap” (Platonov, 2021), where formal ethical codes fail to shape real-world conduct due to the absence of value internalisation. Accordingly, this study predicts that embedding virtue ethics in leadership, training, and organisational culture will bridge this gap and significantly enhance the quality of ethical public service.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach with a case study design to explore the ethical dimensions of public service delivery at the Integrated Police Service Center (SPKT) of Polda Metro Jaya. The units of analysis are both individual and institutional. The individual unit includes SPKT personnel—such as the Head of SPKT, duty officers, and field officers—as well as service users who have directly engaged with SPKT. The institutional unit comprises the SPKT itself, representing the police institution as a key actor in the public service landscape. This dual focus enables the researcher to investigate ethical practices as experienced and enacted at multiple levels of the organisation.

The case study design was chosen to allow for an in-depth, context-sensitive examination of complex ethical phenomena that cannot be captured through quantitative generalisations. The rationale for using a qualitative approach lies in the research goal—to interpret patterns of ethical behaviour, institutional culture, and public perceptions—rather than to test statistical relationships. While the study integrates some quantitative data, such as the number of reports received and processed (e.g., Tables 1 and 3), these figures serve contextual and illustrative purposes only. They are used to support, not drive, the interpretive and thematic analysis, in line with the nature of qualitative inquiry (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2011).

Primary data was collected from 15 purposively selected informants, including SPKT leadership, operational officers, and service users, all of whom possess first-hand experience with police service delivery. Secondary data was obtained through document analysis, including internal Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), public complaint archives, Perpol No. 7 of 2022 (Police Ethics Regulation), as well as

statistical summaries from the National Police and Ombudsman reports. These sources provided triangulated insight into institutional norms, policy frameworks, and ethical expectations at the organisational level.

Data collection techniques included (1) in-depth semi-structured interviews to capture informants' reflections on ethical challenges and service interactions; (2) participant observation over a 28-day period at the SPKT service area to directly observe behavioural patterns, emotional tone, and communication styles; and (3) document analysis of formal guidelines and ethical regulations. Interview protocols were designed around key themes of virtue ethics, including empathy, fairness, phronesis, and integrity. Ethical procedures such as informed consent, anonymity, and voluntary participation were strictly upheld throughout the fieldwork (Wahyuni, 2023).

Data analysis followed a thematic analysis framework, which included transcription, open coding, categorisation, and synthesis of recurring patterns. Analytical themes were derived inductively from the data, guided by the theoretical framework of virtue ethics. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, this research applied method and data triangulation, member checking, and the four established criteria for qualitative rigour: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Stake, 2005). Although some descriptive statistics were used to support the narrative, the core of the analysis remains qualitative, focused on meaning-making and institutional critique rather than statistical testing.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Evaluation of SPKT Service Practices in Handling Public Reports**

Based on field observations conducted during October 2024, the SPKT unit of Polda Metro Jaya, which serves as the primary gateway for public reporting, operates 24 hours a day. Throughout the four-week observation period, it was recorded that the unit received an average of more than 100 reports per day, handled by 23 personnel working in three shifts. Annual data from 2023 shows a total of 18,938 reports submitted to SPKT, with the majority concerning SKCK services (11,240 cases), followed by theft (4,451 cases) and assault (1,280 cases).

Each reporting process involves a series of administrative steps, including identity verification, form completion, and the official recording of the report. According to the SPKT's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and time observations recorded during the study, the average duration per case is between 20 to 25 minutes. During this process, little to no room was observed for interpersonal dialogue or empathetic communication. Officers were seen to focus strictly on procedural and administrative efficiency, aiming to meet the time targets set out in the SOP.

Observation findings were supported by interview statements indicating that the interaction between officers and the public was predominantly formal and transactional. Officers provided services with serious expressions, rarely smiling or making meaningful eye contact. One applicant stated, "I just wanted a little explanation, but it felt like I was being rushed. They were friendly, but didn't have time to explain what actions would be taken" (IF.5, October 2024). An SPKT officer also remarked, "We have followed the procedures, but sometimes the public want to be heard more deeply. That is difficult with such long queues" (IF.3, October 2024). A review of the SPKT SOP revealed that performance indicators are limited to procedural completion and time efficiency, with no mention of empathy or interpersonal communication as measures of service quality.

As shown in Table 1, the SPKT unit of Polda Metro Jaya handled a total of 18,938 reports in 2023, covering a variety of service types and criminal offences. The data reveals that the majority of cases were

administrative in nature—most notably requests for *Surat Keterangan Catatan Kepolisian* (SKCK), or Police Clearance Certificates, which accounted for 11,240 reports. An SKCK is an official document issued by the Indonesian National Police that certifies whether or not an individual has a criminal record, typically required for job applications, civil service entry, or visa purposes. Other frequently reported cases included theft, assault, and various criminal complaints. This distribution highlights the dual role of SPKT officers in managing both bureaucratic administrative duties and frontline criminal reporting, offering critical context for understanding their operational workload and service priorities.

**Table 1. Number of Case Reports at SPKT Polda Metro Jaya**

No	Report Type	Count
1	SKCK (Police Clearance Certificates) Service	11,240
2	Theft	4,451
3	Fraud	134
4	Extortion	315
5	Assault	1,280
6	Rape	19
7	Murder	22
8	Vandalism	161
9	Loss Report Service	740
10	Kidnapping	12
11	Defamation	564
Total		18.938

To further substantiate the observational data, Table 2 presents selected case examples drawn from interviews with service applicants at SPKT. Each entry highlights key patterns of officer behaviour as perceived by the public, alongside direct quotes and the relevant aspects of virtue ethics associated with the interactions. These accounts offer insight into how procedural efficiency often overshadowed empathetic communication, particularly in emotionally charged cases such as theft, fraud, and personal loss.

**Table 2. Findings of SPKT Service Case Study**

Report Type	Key Findings	Interview Quotes	Relevant Virtue Ethics Aspects
<b>Lost Wallet</b>	Lack of explanation about follow-up actions, feeling rushed	"I just wanted a little explanation, but it felt like being rushed. They were friendly, but didn't have time to talk at all about what efforts would be made." (Applicant IF.5)	Communicative virtue, empathy
<b>Stolen Motorcycle</b>	Minimal empathy toward the emotional state of applicants who lost valuable assets	"I understand they're busy, but losing a motorcycle isn't trivial for me. It felt like being treated as just a queue number, not a person in need of help." (Applicant IF.6)	Empathy, recognition of individual dignity

<b>Car Purchase Fraud</b>	Lack of opportunity to explain complexity, officer's focus on filling out forms	of to case	"The case is complicated, there's evidence of transfers and chats, but the officer seemed to only focus on filling out forms. I'm not sure if all the important details were properly recorded." (Applicant IF.7)	Phronesis (practical wisdom), virtue of listening
<b>Online Fraud</b>	Officer's attitude that seemed to downplay the significance of the case	attitude to the case	"As soon as I said I was scammed online, the officer immediately put on an 'oh, the usual case' face. Yet the amount was quite substantial and this was savings for my child's college tuition." (Applicant IF.8)	Respect for others' perspectives, non-judgmental attitude

The findings presented in Table 2 are corroborated by qualitative data obtained through interviews and direct observation. Several informants consistently reported that officers prioritised procedural adherence over interpersonal engagement. Officers were observed moving quickly from one reporter to the next with limited facial expressions, rarely offering a smile or making eye contact. The average time spent per case, ranging from 20 to 25 minutes, aligned with the standards set in the SPKT Standard Operating Procedure. However, this emphasis on efficiency appears to have come at the expense of empathetic communication. As noted by an applicant who reported a lost item (IF.5), the interaction felt rushed, with little room for explanation. A similar concern was voiced by an officer (IF.3), who acknowledged that while procedures were followed, it was challenging to provide more personal attention due to the constant pressure of long queues. Notably, the SPKT SOP makes no mention of empathy or interpersonal communication as part of the official service quality indicators, reflecting a systemic omission of ethical responsiveness in the evaluation framework.

In simpler terms, the data and observations indicate that while SPKT officers at Polda Metro Jaya are effective in completing administrative procedures quickly, their approach to public service lacks warmth and personal engagement. Most applicants are processed efficiently, but with minimal communication, empathy, or emotional support. Interactions are brief and transactional, with little effort to explain procedures or listen attentively to individual concerns. As a result, members of the public often feel rushed, unheard, and treated more like case numbers than individuals seeking help.

From the data and interview excerpts, several recurring patterns can be identified in the service practices at SPKT Polda Metro Jaya. First, there is a strong tendency to prioritise procedural completion over interpersonal interaction. Officers focus on fulfilling administrative steps within the expected time frame, often leaving little space for human engagement. Second, the communication style observed is predominantly formal and directive, with officers offering limited explanations or emotional responsiveness, even in cases involving distress or significant loss. Third, the service appears to be experienced by the public as impersonal, with applicants reporting feelings of being rushed or dismissed. This perception is reinforced by the lack of non-verbal gestures such as eye contact or reassuring body language. These patterns suggest that while SPKT services meet the technical standards set by institutional protocols, they fall short in addressing the human aspects of public service. The findings highlight a gap between procedural efficiency and ethical responsiveness, pointing to a systemic issue in which empathy, patience, and personalised care are not integrated into the service culture.

These findings contribute valuable insight into the limitations of current police service practices, particularly by highlighting the disconnect between procedural efficiency and ethical responsiveness. While SPKT services at Polda Metro Jaya have achieved technical standards such as speed and accuracy, the absence of empathetic interaction and personalised communication underscores a significant ethical gap. This study reaffirms that public service quality cannot be measured solely by administrative compliance; it must also account for the ability of officers to respond to the emotional and relational needs of the public (O'Neill & Holdaway, 2007).

By identifying structural and behavioural factors that hinder ethical service—such as rigid SOPs, workload pressures, and lack of interpersonal training—this research extends the conversation beyond the limitations of rule-based professional ethics. It sheds light on how formal ethics, like those outlined in Perpol No. 7 of 2022, can unintentionally neglect the moral dimensions of service. In doing so, the study supports a shift toward **virtue ethics**, which places emphasis on the development of moral character and internalised values. It introduces practical virtues—such as empathy, *phronesis* (practical wisdom), communicative clarity, and patience—as essential to restoring human-centred service in bureaucratic environments.

These findings resonate with prior studies that stress the importance of ethical responsiveness as a foundational component of trustworthy policing. Research has shown that effective police service requires not only adherence to procedural standards but also the capacity to engage with the public in ways that are empathetic, transparent, and ethically grounded (Khan & Macvean, 2025; Waldenfels, 2010). The lack of interpersonal sensitivity and emotional awareness in SPKT services at Polda Metro Jaya reflects a broader pattern identified in global policing studies, where rigid Standard Operating Procedures and performance pressures often override moral responsiveness. This study affirms the relevance of virtue ethics as a corrective approach—particularly virtues such as *phronesis* (practical wisdom), empathy, and communicative clarity—which align with research highlighting the role of ethical leadership and moral development in enhancing public sector performance (Chun, 2005; Zheng et al., 2024). By integrating these insights, the research contributes to a growing body of literature that argues for human-centred policing models rooted in character formation, not just rule compliance.

### **Identifying the Causes of Weak Implementation of Ethics in SPKT Services**

This section is based on data collected through 21 consecutive days of field observation at the SPKT unit of Polda Metro Jaya, along with in-depth interviews involving the Head of SPKT, duty chiefs, implementing officers, and service applicants. It is further supported by a document review of the Indonesian Police Code of Ethics (Perpol No. 7 of 2022). The findings reveal a persistent pattern of ethical shortcomings in service delivery, which—although not amounting to serious legal infractions—are recurrent and have gradually become normalised within the institutional work culture. These infractions include poor communication, lack of empathy, and procedural rigidity, suggesting that ethical deficiencies are not isolated incidents but symptoms of a broader systemic issue embedded in everyday practice.

Internal testimonies from SPKT personnel reveal that ethical challenges are not merely the result of individual negligence but are deeply influenced by structural and technical pressures. The Head of SPKT (IF.1) acknowledged the difficulty in sustaining consistent ethical service, stating, *“We have tried to implement excellent service standards, but still face obstacles, especially regarding personnel consistency in applying them.”* The issue of workload and staff imbalance was further emphasised by the Duty Chief (IF.2), who remarked, *“High workload and limited personnel are the main constraints. The ratio between personnel and applicants is unbalanced, so during peak hours service is often suboptimal.”* From the perspective of

implementing officers, ethical lapses often occur in the face of demanding service environments and the diverse attitudes of applicants. One officer (IF.3) explained, *“Sometimes we are overwhelmed with applicants who are impatient or don’t understand procedures. So communication becomes less effective.”* Another officer (IF.4) added that technical barriers also hinder service quality: *“The system often experiences errors, so we have to work manually, which is time-consuming.”* These statements point to a clear conclusion: lapses in ethical conduct are not necessarily driven by intentional disregard, but rather emerge from operational limitations, high-pressure conditions, and inadequate systemic support.

From the perspective of service users, ethical concerns primarily revolve around the lack of empathy, insufficient communication, and inconsistencies in how applicants are treated. One applicant (IF.6) expressed disappointment, stating, *“I felt disrespected when reporting, officers responded minimally without showing empathy.”* Another complainant shared frustration over the absence of follow-up on their case: *“It’s been two weeks since I filed a report, with no clarity yet. I’ve already asked several times.”* Observational data support these claims, revealing a pattern of indifferent officer behaviour, minimal eye contact, and a reluctance to engage in meaningful dialogue. Field notes also recorded instances of preferential treatment, where applicants who appeared familiar to the officers were served more quickly than others who had arrived earlier. These findings underscore the perception among the public that the SPKT service lacks fairness, transparency, and emotional sensitivity, thereby undermining public trust and the legitimacy of police authority.

To categorise the forms of ethical breaches observed in the field, Table 3 summarises key violations as reported by applicants and confirmed through direct observation, along with their corresponding ethical provisions under Perpol No. 7 of 2022.

**Table 3. Types of Ethical Violations in SPKT Services**

Type of Violation	Detailed Description	Source	Violated Code of Ethics (Article)
<b>Non-empathetic communication</b>	The officer answered briefly, did not greet, did not show an empathetic expression.	Applicant observation & interview	Community Ethics (Article 11 paragraphs 1 and 2): Requires polite, empathetic attitudes and upholding humanitarian values in serving the community.
<b>Unexplained delay</b>	No clarity on report status despite long waiting time	Applicant interview	Institutional Ethics (Article 10 paragraph 1 letter f): Obligation to provide services according to time and procedures, avoiding abuse of authority or neglect of duties.
<b>Unenthusiastic attitude</b>	The officers seemed rushed and avoided interaction	Direct observation	Personality Ethics (Article 12 paragraph 1 letters b and c): Professional and responsible for tasks; demonstrate integrity and a spirit of service.
<b>Lack of service information</b>	The reporter was confused because there were no clear instructions	Observation & interview	Community and Institutional Ethics (Articles 10 and 11): Provide correct, complete and



			easy-to-understand information to the public.
<b>Special deposit/access</b>	Certain applicants are processed more quickly due to personal closeness to the officer.	Observation and interview	Personality and Institutional Ethics (Article 10 paragraph 1 letter h & Article 12 paragraph 1 letter a): Prohibits discrimination and requires fairness and equality of service.

As shown in Table 3, although these behaviours do not necessarily constitute legal misconduct, their repeated occurrence significantly undermines the quality of public service and public trust in the institution (Crowder & Turvey, 2013).

Document analysis of the Indonesian Police Code of Ethics (Perpol No. 7 of 2022) and the official SPKT Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) reveals a strong emphasis on procedural compliance, administrative discipline, and service efficiency. These regulations set clear expectations regarding reporting timelines, documentation accuracy, and avoidance of abuse of authority. However, neither Perpol nor the SOP explicitly addresses the cultivation of moral character, empathy, or interpersonal communication as core components of service quality. This discrepancy between normative expectations and on-the-ground practice illustrates a clear norm–practice gap, where officers follow rules mechanically without integrating ethical sensitivity into their conduct. The absence of virtue-oriented guidance within these official documents limits the institutional capacity to develop a culture of ethical responsiveness, leaving officers unequipped to manage complex human interactions beyond procedural mandates.

To provide a clearer understanding of the root causes behind the weak implementation of ethics in SPKT services, the various structural, cultural, personal, and normative barriers identified through interviews, observations, and document analysis are summarised in Table 4. This thematic categorisation highlights how the interplay between operational pressures, permissive work culture, individual limitations, and procedural rigidity contributes to the erosion of ethical responsiveness within the institution.

**Table 4. Thematic Classification of Barriers to Ethical Implementation in SPKT Services at Polda Metro Jaya**

Main Theme	Sub-Theme (Code)	Description	Data Source
<b>Structural Barriers</b>	High workload	Officers overwhelmed by high number of applicants per day	IF.2, IF.4, Observation
	Imbalanced personnel ratio	Staffing insufficient compared to service demand	IF.2, Observation
<b>Cultural Barriers</b>	Indecisiveness of leadership	Lack of consistent leadership in enforcing ethical standards	IF.1, Observation, Document Review

	Permissive attitude toward ethical violations	Unethical behaviours tolerated as routine	IF.3, IF.4, Field Notes
<b>Personal Barriers</b>	Lack of empathy	Officers fail to respond to applicants' emotional needs	IF.6, IF.3, Observation
	Rigid and unfriendly communication	Minimal eye contact, short responses, no follow-up	IF.6, IF.4, Observation
<b>Normative Gaps</b>	Inflexible SOP and legalistic orientation	SOP emphasises rules but lacks ethical reflection or interpersonal guidance	Document Review, Observation
	Absence of ethics-based training	Training focuses on procedure, not moral development	IF.1, Document Review, Additional Interviews

The findings show that the weak implementation of ethics at SPKT Polda Metro Jaya stems from a combination of systemic, cultural, personal, and regulatory factors. Officers are under pressure due to high workloads and insufficient staffing, while leadership inconsistencies and a tolerant attitude toward minor ethical breaches have allowed such practices to become routine. At the individual level, many officers lack the training and capacity to engage with the public in an empathetic and respectful manner. Additionally, both the Code of Ethics and internal SOPs focus heavily on technical procedures, without promoting the development of moral character or interpersonal sensitivity. Together, these issues have created a work environment where procedural compliance is prioritised, but ethical responsiveness is largely absent.

The data reveal several recurring patterns that explain the weak implementation of ethics within SPKT services. First, there is a clear over-reliance on procedural compliance and rule-based ethics, with minimal emphasis on cultivating moral character among officers. Second, ethical principles—although codified in regulations such as Perpol No. 7 of 2022—are not translated into daily practice, creating a norm–practice gap that disconnects written standards from lived realities. Third, organisational culture plays a significant role, with tolerance for discourtesy, favouritism, and indifference gradually forming a permissive environment for minor ethical breaches. Fourth, the absence of consistent moral leadership and virtue-based training has resulted in the failure to embed empathy, patience, and professional integrity as part of the institutional identity. Taken together, these patterns suggest that the core problem is not the lack of ethical rules, but the lack of ethical formation—indicating the need for a transformative shift from procedural discipline to character-based professional development.

These findings indicate that the weak implementation of ethics in SPKT services is not solely an issue of regulations, but rather a moral character crisis among the officers. A rule-based ethics approach is insufficient to address the problems at hand. An ethics approach based on character (virtue ethics) is needed, one that emphasizes the habituation of moral values from basic police education and is reinforced through a system of development and performance evaluations.

The research findings show that the weak implementation of ethics in SPKT services at Polda Metro Jaya is not merely caused by a lack of regulations or SOPs, but rather relates more deeply to the insufficient development of moral character among personnel and the failure to establish a service culture based on virtue ethics.

Theoretically, the virtue ethics approach emphasizes the importance of habitual excellence in professional life. In the context of policing, this includes instilling values such as integrity, empathy, role modeling, justice, and moral courage. However, the study's findings indicate that these values have not become part of the professional identity of SPKT members. This is evident in the poor quality of communication, discriminatory treatment, and a lack of empathy in service delivery.

From an institutional perspective, legalistic SOPs do not provide sufficient space to develop ethical sensitivity. Regulations like Perpol No. 7 of 2022 have outlined ethical principles, but in practice, they have not been integrated into the daily work culture. This situation reflects a gap between normative rules and factual practices (norm-practice gap), which contributes to a crisis in human-centered public service.

Organizational culture is also a key factor. Tolerance for discriminatory behavior and rudeness has been identified, which slowly creates a permissive culture towards minor ethical violations. In this case, moral leadership is crucial to reforming a work atmosphere based on integrity. Unfortunately, this role has not been consistently carried out.

In comparison, public service practices based on virtue ethics in various countries place moral values as part of routine training, internal supervision, and reward systems. Therefore, a transformation in police education and training models is needed, one that not only teaches "what is right" but also "why it is important" and "how to habituate it."

This violation cannot be fully answered through a rule-based ethics approach, because the problem is more related to the absence of internal moral quality or character of the officer concerned (MacyIntire, 2017). The virtue ethics approach, which focuses on the formation of good character and habits such as empathy, patience, and wisdom, becomes more relevant in this context (Taggart & Zenor, 2022). The ethics of virtue encourages officers not only to act according to the rules, but also to have moral sensitivity (Zargar, 2020).

Previous studies have highlighted that in police practice, there is often tension between demands for work efficiency and commitment to ethical service, so that officers may be unfriendly or less communicative because they are used to operational pressures (Downs & Ranadive Swienton, 2012). In the long run, these attitudes can become part of an organizational culture that is permissive of unwritten unethical behavior (Haq, 2011). Therefore, ethics training for police officers needs to shift from mere knowledge of laws and regulations to character education that fosters a noble moral disposition in every act of service (Helkama & Sortheix, 2015). Virtue-based ethics education helps officers to "be good people" in a moral sense, not just to "do the right thing" procedurally (Baumane-Vitolina et al., 2016).

The findings of this study underscore that the root of weak ethical implementation in SPKT services lies not in the absence of regulations, but in the underdevelopment of moral character and ethical awareness among officers. This suggests that the prevailing reliance on procedural compliance and rule-based standards is insufficient to address the complex ethical needs of public service. Instead, a shift

towards virtue ethics—which emphasises the internalisation of moral values such as empathy, patience, and wisdom—is necessary to build an ethically responsive police institution. As MacyIntire (2017) notes, ethical violations in public institutions often stem from character deficiencies rather than regulatory gaps. Likewise, Taggart and Zenor (2022) argue that virtue ethics provides a more sustainable foundation for ethical conduct by cultivating habits of moral sensitivity and good judgment in officers.

Moreover, the presence of a norm–practice gap, where written codes such as Perpol No. 7 of 2022 fail to translate into daily behaviour, highlights the need for character education that is integrated into organisational culture and training systems. Studies have shown that when moral values are incorporated into routine training, internal supervision, and reward systems, they lead to more humane and trustworthy public service delivery (Baumane-Vitolina et al., 2016; Zargar, 2020). The operational pressures faced by officers—such as time constraints and applicant overload—often force them into transactional behaviour, limiting their ability to engage ethically. As Downs and Ranadive Swienton (2012) observed, prolonged exposure to such pressures risks normalising unfriendly or indifferent attitudes, ultimately shaping a permissive culture around unethical behaviour (Haq, 2011).

In light of these insights, the study contributes to the growing body of literature that advocates for a transformative model of police training—one that goes beyond teaching “what is right” to nurturing a deeper understanding of “why it matters” and “how to habituate it” (Helkama & Sortheix, 2015). Virtue ethics education, if applied consistently, can help officers not only to follow rules, but also to embody the moral responsibility of serving the public with dignity and integrity.

### **Police Service Reform Strategy Based on Virtue Ethics**

This sub-section aims to explore strategic directions for reforming police service ethics at SPKT Polda Metro Jaya by moving beyond legalistic and procedural frameworks towards a character-based ethical model. Drawing on empirical findings from interviews, observations, and document analysis, it identifies the limitations of current approaches grounded solely in compliance and highlights the urgent need for a transformation rooted in virtue ethics. The goal is to propose a conceptual and practical foundation for embedding values such as empathy, integrity, and moral wisdom into institutional training, leadership, and service culture—ultimately redefining policing as not only a professional duty, but a moral vocation.

Interviews with SPKT leadership reveal a critical gap between formal ethical regulations and the cultivation of character among officers. As IF.1 acknowledged, *“Although service procedures have been implemented according to standards, the character building aspect has not been the main focus. The training received is mostly technical and administrative, not morally transformative.”* This statement is echoed by IF.2, who noted that, *“The pressure on reporting and speed of service has made officers place more emphasis on compliance with SOPs than on the quality of human interaction in serving the community.”* Observational findings support these views, showing that while officers consistently follow procedural steps, their interactions with the public are often rigid and lacking in empathy. These insights suggest that current training models prioritise efficiency and procedural adherence, while neglecting the ethical dimension of service—particularly in the areas of moral judgment, interpersonal sensitivity, and reflective engagement.

Perspectives from both experts and service users highlight a shared concern regarding the narrow interpretation of ethics within police services. According to a public service scholar (IF.10), *“Quality police service is not only measured by punctuality or efficiency, but by the values of justice, transparency, and humanity in service practices. So far, there has often been a misconception in understanding ethics as merely compliance with the rules. Without internalising the values of virtue, officers will only become bureaucratic*

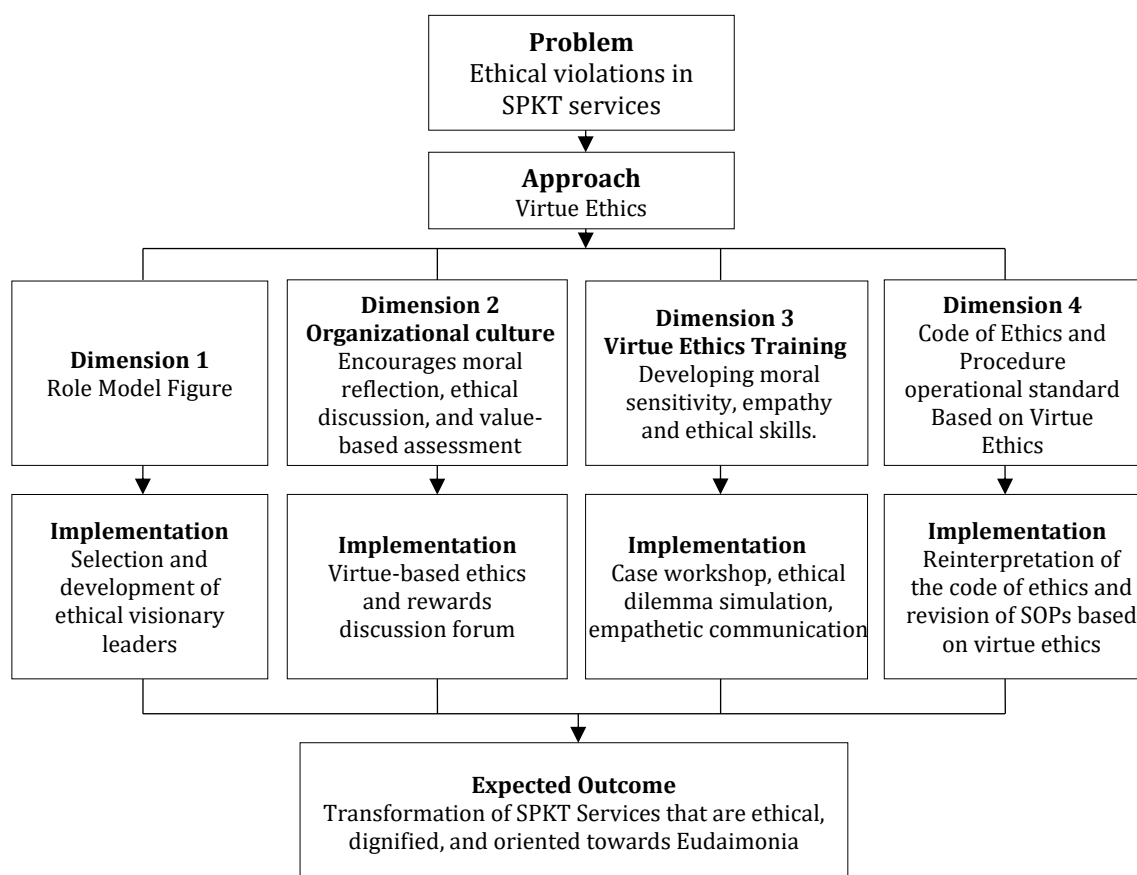
*instruments, not morally intact public servants.*” This sentiment is echoed by a service applicant (IF.8), who remarked, “*Although the service is quite fast and according to the steps, it does not show empathy and attention to the case. I feel that this report is only administrative but there is no serious effort to reveal it.*” These accounts demonstrate that ethical policing requires more than operational speed; it demands emotional attentiveness and moral responsibility. The current emphasis on rule-following overlooks the deeper ethical obligation of serving with empathy and integrity—values that define policing not merely as a job, but as a moral calling.

Field observations further reinforce the lack of practical ethical responsiveness in SPKT services. In one recorded incident, an elderly applicant appeared visibly confused while attempting to fill out a report form. Rather than offering assistance, the officer merely pointed to another desk without speaking or making eye contact, then resumed administrative tasks without further engagement. This detached response—absent of warmth, guidance, or reassurance—illustrates a critical absence of *phronesis* (practical wisdom) and moral sensitivity. The officer followed procedure, but failed to recognise the applicant’s vulnerability and provide humane, context-sensitive support. Such behaviour, though procedurally correct, reflects a failure to embody the ethical values of attentiveness, empathy, and care—revealing the limitations of a purely task-oriented service model that neglects the relational and moral dimensions of public service.

The empirical evidence presented in this study clearly points to the necessity of adopting a virtue ethics-based reform strategy within police services. The recurring absence of empathy, moral attentiveness, and contextual judgment among officers underscores the limitations of an approach centred solely on rules and procedures. While not a new concept, virtue ethics—with its roots in Aristotelian thought—has gained renewed relevance in public service discourse as a means of fostering integrity, compassion, and moral courage in everyday practice. As Aristotle emphasised, ethical excellence is not achieved through compliance alone, but through the habituation of good character (*ethos*) cultivated over time. This perspective is echoed by Chase (2019), who argues that policing should be seen not just as a technocratic duty but as a moral calling, requiring reflective engagement with the human dimensions of service. By embedding values such as empathy, *phronesis* (practical wisdom), and justice into training, leadership, and institutional culture, a virtue ethics approach offers a transformative path toward rebuilding public trust and elevating the moral standards of police professionalism.

Building upon these theoretical foundations and empirical findings, this study proposes a strategic framework for integrating virtue ethics into police service reform. The framework outlines four interrelated dimensions—leadership, organisational culture, training, and procedural revision—each designed to internalise ethical values and strengthen moral competence among officers. This approach not only addresses individual and institutional gaps, but also promotes a shift from rule-bound practices to value-driven service. The key elements of this reform model are summarised in Figure 1.

Figure 1 presents a conceptual framework for reforming SPKT police services through a virtue ethics approach. It consists of four core dimensions: (1) the development of ethical role models in leadership; (2) the cultivation of an organisational culture that promotes moral reflection and value-based discussions; (3) the implementation of virtue ethics training to enhance moral sensitivity and empathetic skills; and (4) the revision of codes of ethics and SOPs grounded in virtue-based principles. Each dimension is supported by practical implementation steps, all directed toward the transformation of police services into ethical, dignified, and human-oriented institutions.



**Figure 1. Police Service Transformation Strategy based on Virtue Ethics**

The proposed virtue ethics-based reform strategy comprises four integrated dimensions that respond directly to the weaknesses identified in SPKT’s current ethical practices. The first dimension underscores the importance of ethical leadership, advocating for the selection and development of visionary role models who embody virtues such as fairness, humility, and practical wisdom. This aligns with earlier findings that highlight the absence of character-driven guidance in current leadership structures. The second dimension focuses on cultivating an organisational culture that supports moral reflection, ethical discussion, and value-based recognition—addressing the current permissive climate towards routine ethical violations. The third dimension emphasises the need for structured training in moral sensitivity, empathy, and ethical decision-making through case simulations and dilemma-based learning, thereby bridging the gap between procedural compliance and human-centred service. The fourth dimension calls for a reinterpretation of existing codes of ethics and SOPs, encouraging institutions to move beyond rigid legalism and integrate virtue-based reasoning into daily operational standards. Together, these four pillars provide a comprehensive blueprint for fostering morally competent and relationally responsive police services.

Implementing a virtue ethics framework in police services requires sustained institutional commitment, beginning with leadership recruitment that values moral integrity alongside technical competence (Grant et al., 2018; Newstead et al., 2020). Training must go beyond procedures to include scenario-based learning, ethical dilemmas, and reflective storytelling to cultivate phronesis, empathy, and

ethical judgment (Jenkins et al., 2021; Pollock et al., 2023). Simultaneously, fostering an ethical culture through peer evaluations, moral mentorship, and rewards for ethical courage strengthens daily practice (Busch et al., 2024; Enciso et al., 2017). Yet, institutional inertia—rooted in bureaucratic habits and resource constraints—remains a barrier unless supported by ethical leadership and strategic communication (Jehan et al., 2020; Moore & Beadle, 2006). Research confirms that implicit ethics institutionalisation, such as nurturing an ethical climate, has greater impact on moral behaviour than rule-based codes alone (Vitell & Singhapakdi, 2008). Thus, virtue ethics must be embedded not just in policy, but in the character, culture, and conscience of the institution.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study advances the discourse on ethical governance by demonstrating that virtue ethics offers not merely a philosophical ideal but a pragmatic and measurable framework for enhancing integrity, trust, and legitimacy in public service—especially in law enforcement (Robinson, 2016; Solum, 2015). Unlike rule-based or consequentialist models that often prioritise compliance or outcomes, virtue ethics adopts an agent-centred perspective that emphasises the habituation of moral character (Crossan et al., 2013; Platonov, 2021). In alignment with Aristotelian thought, this approach reconceptualises ethics as *aretē*—a cultivated excellence reinforced through practice, leadership, and institutional culture (Hacker-Wright et al., 2020; Peter, 2018). Such a paradigm bridges the persistent gap between organisational virtues and lived ethical behaviour (Dyck & Wong, 2010; Verbos et al., 2007), offering actionable strategies through role modelling, reflective training, and ethical leadership (Fein, 2013; Zheng et al., 2024). Ultimately, this reframing challenges dominant procedural paradigms by positioning police professionalism as a *moral vocation*, rather than a mechanistic function—thus providing a compelling roadmap for embedding virtue ethics into institutional norms and day-to-day public service.

The transformation of police service ethics at SPKT Polda Metro Jaya demands more than procedural adjustments or technical training—it requires a fundamental reorientation toward moral character and virtue cultivation. The evidence presented shows that while formal regulations provide structure, they fail to address the relational and emotional dimensions of service that are essential to ethical policing. A virtue ethics approach offers a powerful alternative, enabling officers not only to do what is right, but to become the kind of people who naturally embody justice, empathy, and integrity in their actions. This reform is not a quick fix, but a long-term moral investment in public service, calling for leadership, organisational change, and educational renewal that centres human dignity at the heart of policing.

## **Discussion**

This study examined the ethical dimensions of public service delivery at the SPKT unit of Polda Metro Jaya, focusing on the practices of police officers, recurring ethical violations, underlying causes of weak ethical implementation, and potential reform strategies grounded in virtue ethics. The findings revealed a systemic overemphasis on procedural efficiency and rule compliance at the expense of empathy, interpersonal engagement, and moral judgement. Officers were found to perform tasks in a formal, transactional manner, with minimal attention to the emotional and relational needs of service users. The study identified structural, cultural, personal, and normative factors contributing to this condition, including staff shortages, SOP rigidity, lack of ethics-based training, and a permissive organisational culture. Ethical regulations such as Perpol No. 7 of 2022 were shown to be insufficiently integrated into daily practice, creating a significant norm–practice gap. As a response, the research proposes a shift from rule-based ethics to a virtue ethics framework that emphasises character

development, moral leadership, and institutional transformation to restore ethical responsiveness in public policing.

The empirical patterns uncovered in this study—particularly the prioritisation of procedural compliance over ethical responsiveness—can be explained through the theoretical lens of virtue ethics and its contrast with rule-based and consequentialist ethical frameworks. The core issue is not the absence of regulations, but the *limited ethical formation* of police officers, which results from a professional culture that values efficiency and legalism over character development. This disconnect is rooted in what scholars describe as a *norm–practice gap*—a condition where formal codes of ethics exist but fail to shape real behaviour due to the lack of habituation and internalisation of moral values (Crossan et al., 2013; Platonov, 2021).

Virtue ethics, grounded in Aristotelian thought, posits that moral excellence (*aretē*) is not attained by external regulation alone, but through the habituation of virtues such as empathy, *phronesis* (practical wisdom), and integrity, which must be cultivated over time within supportive institutional structures (Hacker-Wright et al., 2020). In the context of policing, the absence of such habituation explains why officers—though procedurally competent—struggle to respond ethically to human needs. Structural factors such as workload pressure and rigid SOPs only exacerbate this, reinforcing a bureaucratic mindset that detaches officers from the ethical implications of their service.

The findings also confirm previous theoretical assertions that legalistic ethics models (e.g., deontology or utilitarianism) are ill-suited for frontline public service work, where ethical judgement must be responsive to context and relationship (Muswaka, 2017; Quirk, 2021). Without internalised virtues, officers default to mechanistic performance—fulfilling procedures but failing in moral presence. This condition is not accidental, but the product of institutional design that neglects the moral cultivation of its agents. As such, the lack of ethical responsiveness observed is a predictable consequence of a system that teaches compliance but not character, and measures success in time-efficiency rather than in relational integrity.

The findings of this study align with a growing body of literature that critiques procedural and legalistic approaches in public service ethics, particularly within law enforcement institutions. Similar to research by Downs and Ranadive Swienton (2012), which revealed that operational pressure often leads to diminished officer empathy and rigid communication styles, this study confirms that excessive focus on SOP adherence compromises the relational dimensions of service. Likewise, Haq (2011) observed how bureaucratic routines can normalise unfriendly behaviour, gradually embedding it into institutional culture—a pattern clearly reflected in the daily practices of SPKT personnel.

However, this study moves beyond prior descriptive accounts by offering a more comprehensive virtue ethics framework as both a diagnostic and reformative tool. While earlier studies (Baumane-Vitolina et al., 2016; Helkama & Sortheix, 2015) have proposed virtue-based education as a supplement to ethics training, the present research systematically integrates this paradigm across four institutional levels: leadership, culture, training, and procedural reform. This integrative model constitutes the novelty of the study, providing a roadmap for the internalisation of moral values not only through curriculum reform, but through the cultivation of a value-driven organisational ethos.

The findings of this study carry significant social and ideological implications, particularly in the context of public trust and the moral legitimacy of state institutions. At a broader level, the observed ethical deficiencies in SPKT services reflect a historical legacy of bureaucratic formalism in Indonesian public administration—where compliance with procedures has long been privileged over the cultivation of humane, value-based service. This research reveals that such a legacy, when left unchallenged, contributes



to the dehumanisation of public interactions and erodes citizens' sense of dignity and inclusion in the justice process. Ideologically, the study underscores a fundamental tension between technocratic models of governance—which favour efficiency, uniformity, and quantifiable output—and virtue-based paradigms that centre moral agency, empathy, and relational accountability. By exposing this tension, the research calls for a redefinition of public service not merely as a legal obligation, but as a vocation grounded in ethical excellence and civic responsibility. Socially, this shift is essential to rebuilding public confidence in the police, particularly in contexts where perceptions of arbitrariness, unfairness, or indifference have deepened public alienation. Thus, the study contributes to a wider discourse on democratic policing, suggesting that true reform lies not in new rules alone, but in reshaping institutional character and restoring the moral foundations of public service.

The findings of this study reveal both constructive potentials and persistent limitations within the ethical practices of SPKT services at Polda Metro Jaya. While the research affirms the transformative promise of virtue ethics in fostering empathetic, morally grounded public service, it also uncovers entrenched barriers that hinder meaningful reform. Chief among these is the misalignment between procedural compliance and moral responsiveness, where officers mechanically follow regulations yet fail to engage empathetically with the public—reflecting what Parker (2006) describes as the “compliance trap.” Additionally, a form of ethical stagnation persists, sustained by rigid SOPs, lack of ethical leadership, and an organisational culture tolerant of minor moral lapses. As noted by Demmke (2024) and Masters (2019), such inertia resists internal change, weakening reform efforts and risking public disillusionment. To overcome these systemic constraints, reform must integrate virtue-based training, reflective leadership, and institutional alignment between rules and moral values.

Based on the challenges and barriers identified in this research, several strategic and transformative policy actions are necessary to address the weak ethical implementation within SPKT Polda Metro Jaya. First, virtue ethics must be integrated into the foundational curriculum of police education and training, emphasising the cultivation of moral character—such as empathy, justice, and *phronesis* (practical wisdom)—through methods such as ethical dilemma simulations, reflective learning, and case-based discussions. Second, a reformulation of SOPs and codes of conduct is needed to include value-based service indicators, such as empathetic communication, inclusivity, and sensitivity to the emotional needs of service users. Third, policies to develop ethical leadership should be prioritised by appointing morally exemplary personnel to strategic positions and establishing sustained ethical mentoring systems. Fourth, the performance evaluation and reward system must expand beyond administrative outputs to include metrics for interpersonal quality and personal integrity. Finally, the establishment of an independent internal oversight unit is essential—not merely to monitor legal violations, but to assess the ethical quality of daily interactions and ensure value-driven professionalism. These policy measures require firm institutional commitment to ensure that reforms are not merely symbolic but lead to substantive changes in police character and service culture.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study reveals a critical disjunction between procedural efficiency and ethical responsiveness in the public service practices of SPKT Polda Metro Jaya. The findings indicate that while officers comply with administrative protocols, they frequently fall short in embodying the moral and relational qualities essential to ethical policing—such as empathy, fairness, and attentiveness. Rooted in systemic, cultural, personal, and normative barriers, this deficiency reflects not an absence of rules, but an absence of virtue. The study's key insight is that institutional transformation must go beyond formal compliance and

embrace a virtue ethics approach that cultivates moral character, encourages ethical leadership, and embeds value-based thinking into daily police work.

The research offers a significant contribution to the discourse on public service reform by proposing a comprehensive framework for police ethics grounded in virtue ethics. By shifting the analytical and practical lens from rule-based ethics to character-based professionalism, the study introduces an integrative model involving leadership reform, organisational culture change, ethics-driven training, and SOP revision. This framework not only addresses the institutional roots of ethical stagnation but also provides a strategic roadmap for cultivating a humane, trust-based model of policing—an approach that remains underexplored in Indonesian police studies and broader public administration literature.

Nonetheless, this study is not without its limitations. As a qualitative case study centred on a single institutional unit, the findings may not be directly generalisable to other SPKT units or public service institutions without contextual adaptation. Furthermore, the study's reliance on interviews and observations may be subject to perception bias and institutional gatekeeping. Future research could adopt a comparative or longitudinal design, incorporating additional data from multiple regions and perspectives, including citizens with limited access to legal representation or those in rural areas. Such work could deepen understanding of how virtue ethics might be institutionalised across diverse public service settings and inform broader frameworks for ethical governance in Indonesia.

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