

THE INFLUENCE OF THE LEADERSHIP COMPETENCE OF AKIDAH AKHLAK TEACHERS ON THE DISCIPLINE OF EIGHTH-GRADE STUDENTS AT MTs NEGERI 1 SIDRAP

Khaerunnisaa^{1a*}, Syamsuddin^{2b}, Muhammad Rusmin B^{3c}

^{1,2}Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar, Indonesia

^aE-mail: khaerunnisahamzah24@gmail.com

^bE-mail: syamsuddin.sasak@uin-alauddin.ac.id

^cE-mail: muhammad.rusminb@uin-alauddin.ac.id

(*) Corresponding Author

khaerunnisahamzah24@gmail.com

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received : 21-08-2026

Revised : 18-09-2026

Accepted : 30-09-2026

KEYWORDS

Teacher Leadership Competence; Student Discipline; Akidah Akhlak

ABSTRACT

This study examined the leadership competence of Akidah Akhlak teachers, the discipline of Grade VIII learners, and the relationship between the two at MTs Negeri 1 Sidrap, Indonesia. Teachers are expected to cultivate religious practice in the school community, yet violations of school rules, particularly lateness, persist among learners. A quantitative ex post facto design with a psychological approach was used. The sample comprised 65 learners (two intact classes, VIII F and VIII G) from a population of 175. Data were collected with Likert-scale questionnaires (11 items for leadership competence, 17 for discipline; Cronbach's $\alpha \approx .91$ for each) and analyzed with descriptive statistics and simple linear regression in SPSS. Learners rated teachers' leadership competence ($M = 32.03$, $SD = 7.26$) and reported their own discipline ($M = 49.71$, $SD = 10.97$) at a moderate level, near its upper boundary. Discipline was weakest on timeliness-related behaviors. Leadership competence was positively and significantly associated with discipline ($r = .693$, $p < .001$) and was a significant predictor, accounting for 48.1% of its variance ($\hat{Y} = 16.151 + 1.048X$). These findings imply that strengthening teacher leadership, through role modeling, habituation, and school policy, may support learner discipline in madrasahs.

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INTRODUCTION

Teachers are the figures most responsible for educating the nation's children, and parents hope that teachers can combine intellectual stature with noble character (Wibowo & Hamrin, 2012). This expectation is consistent with Law No. 20 of 2003, which defines education as "a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that learners actively develop their potential to possess religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills needed by themselves, society, the nation, and the state" (Presiden RI, 2006). To realize this, teachers carry out three professional tasks: educating, teaching, and training, each requiring particular abilities and competencies (Suyanto & Djihad, 2013). Their central mission is to prepare learners

to become responsible and independent individuals (Rahman, 2014), while also internalizing religious values and shaping individuals of noble character (Wibowo, 2017). The understanding of teacher competence has also developed. Competence is seen as a blend of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes reflected in habits of thinking and acting (Sagala, 2013), or as the ability to perform one's role responsibly and appropriately (Sanjaya, 2019). Statutory provisions set four core competencies: pedagogical, personal, social, and professional (Yamin, 2007). A competent teacher must know not only what to teach but also how to teach (Dangnga et al., 2014). Teachers are expected to be role models for learners and to give useful advice and guidance (Hamalik, 2002), because teaching is regarded as a trust (amanah) that only qualified people should hold (Kariem, 2022).

Among these competencies, leadership holds a special place for teachers of religious education. Leadership is understood as the ability to influence other people's attitudes in their work (Fattah, 2009), that is, the skill to influence others to carry out an activity (Pasolong, 2021). It is marked by a close relationship between leader and followers grounded in shared interests (Enkoswara, 2012), and by actions that coordinate and give direction toward previously set goals (Norhasanah, 2021). In the Islamic tradition, this idea has theological foundations, including QS Luqman/31:17–18, which conveys the messages of establishing prayer, enjoining good, forbidding wrong, and being patient (Departemen Agama RI, 2005). Another foundation is QS as-Sajdah/32:24: "And We made from among them leaders guiding by Our command when they were patient. And they were certain of Our verses" (Fatichuddin, 2023). Normatively, the Ministry of Religious Affairs adds a leadership competence for religious education teachers: the ability to plan, organize, mobilize, safeguard, control, and direct the "cultivation of religious practice within the school community" (Menteri Agama RI, 2010). In the competence standards for Akidah Akhlak (Islamic Creed and Morality) teachers, this competence is formulated as "the teacher's ability to organize all of the school's potential in realizing an Islamic religious culture in the educational unit" (Chaeruddin, 2013). Leadership competence is considered important because it strengthens the other four teacher competencies and nurtures a leadership spirit in learners (Hasanah et al., 2020). The quality of Akidah Akhlak teachers' competence is also reflected in the quality of their instruction (Saimah, 2021), and it can be improved through a vision of instructional quality, innovation, effective teamwork, and continuous monitoring and evaluation (Huda & Achadi, 2024).

Taken together, these perspectives point to a common theoretical logic that links teacher leadership to learner discipline. Across the definitions above, leadership is consistently framed as the capacity to influence others' attitudes and to coordinate and direct their actions toward a shared goal (Fattah, 2009; Pasolong, 2021; Enkoswara, 2012; Norhasanah, 2021), operationalized for religious education teachers as the ability to plan, organize, mobilize, safeguard, control, and direct the cultivation of religious practice within the school community (Menteri Agama RI, 2010; Chaeruddin, 2013). Discipline, as elaborated below, is itself the product of sustained direction, habituation, and role modeling that orient learners' attention and conduct toward established rules (Aulina, 2013; Aly, 1999). On this basis, a teacher's leadership competence can be theorized as a proximal mechanism for learner discipline: by consistently exercising influence, direction, and role modelling, functions inherent to leadership itself, a teacher supplies the very conditions through which rule-consistent, disciplined behavior is expected to form (Fattah, 2009; Pasolong, 2021; Hasanah et al., 2020).

The problem is that these normative expectations do not always match learners' actual behavior. Oktavia (2017) itemizes several indicators of moral decline among adolescents, ranging from dishonesty and rising violence to neglect of timely prayer and declining enthusiasm for learning, work ethic, and discipline. Discipline is one of the main provisions for the next generation, and forming it requires the support of family, school, society, and government (Rahman, 2012). It concerns diligent effort and punctuality, and copying homework before class begins is an example of student indiscipline (Mustoip, 2023). Etymologically, discipline is inner and character training so that one's attention and conduct consistently follow rules and regulations (Aulina, 2013). It is also understood as the process of directing or controlling desires and impulses to achieve more effective action (Saondi & Suherman, 2012), with the

aim of developing self-control and self-direction (Octavia, 2020). The formation of discipline is influenced by obedience to legitimate authority, rewards and punishments, the expectations of others, the giving of gifts, and good social relationships. Its manifestations cover discipline in relation to time, place, and propriety, social norms, and religion (Rahman, 2021). Because school-age learners are in a period of identity seeking with emotions that are not yet stable (Danim, 2012), role modeling becomes a habituation method that contributes greatly to education in worship and character (Aly, 1999). Islamic education itself shapes disciplined character through religious teaching, habituation, advice, reprimand, and educators' role modeling (Salsabila et al., 2020). The impact does not stop at behavior: student discipline accounts for 65% of the variance in physics learning outcomes at SMAN 8 Jambi (Putri et al., 2021).

The same phenomenon appears at MTs Negeri 1 Sidrap. Preliminary observations on 8–12 September 2025 found many punctual and disciplined learners. Violations of school rules nevertheless remain common, particularly in the observed classes, in the form of late arrival, tardiness to lessons, unfinished assignments, and lingering in the canteen during class hours. The researcher's documentation records sanctions for late students and consultations with parents of students whose attendance was below 75%. Preliminary questionnaire data from 65 learners in classes VIII F and VIII G show that their average responses, both on the Akidah Akhlak teachers' leadership competence and on discipline, are only about 2.9 on a 1–4 scale. On the four-point response scale used, this mean score falls within the "fairly good" category, yet remains below the scale's upper boundary, indicating a gap relative to the optimal level that warrants further empirical examination.

Previous studies have addressed both sides of this problem but have not connected them. Teacher leadership has been studied with other dependent variables, namely learning motivation, on which the leadership competence of Islamic education teachers has a positive effect, contributing 16.5% (Anwar et al., 2021). For students' politeness the contribution is 45.5% (Sulfiana, 2022), and for interpersonal communication intelligence the effect is significant at a moderate category level (Mutmainnah, 2021). A meta-analysis found that teacher leadership is positively related to student achievement ($r = 0.19$), without examining discipline or the madrasah context (Shen et al., 2020). Discipline has been studied through authority-related variables: teacher authority significantly affects student discipline (Heryanto et al., 2020), and lecturer authority together with code-of-ethics enforcement contributes 28% to university students' discipline (Syafrida, 2021). Teacher competence and principal leadership are also reported to influence discipline, but through a descriptive qualitative approach that does not measure the magnitude of the effect and does not treat teacher leadership as a separate variable (Dakhi, 2021). Meanwhile, conceptual work on teacher leadership competence stops at a literature review (Hasanah et al., 2020). Consequently, no quantitative evidence yet tests whether leadership competence as regulated by Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation No. 16 of 2010, specifically among Akidah Akhlak teachers, affects the discipline of madrasah learners.

This study therefore aims to describe the leadership competence of Akidah Akhlak teachers and the discipline of Grade VIII learners at MTs Negeri 1 Sidrap, and to analyze the effect of the former on the latter. The hypothesis is that the leadership competence of Akidah Akhlak teachers has a positive and significant effect on learners' discipline. A hypothesis is understood as a provisional answer grounded in theory rather than in empirical facts (Sugiyono, 2013), and it is tested with a t-test on the regression coefficient (Hasan, 2008). To this end, the study is designed as a quantitative ex post facto study, that is, one without treatment of the variables (Sugiyono, 2003), using a psychological approach (Adiputra et al., 2021) and research ethics principles based on the Belmont Report (Sarosa, 2012). Its methodological framework draws on Saptutyingsih & Setyaningrum (2019) and Umar (2008). Leadership competence is positioned as the independent variable and discipline as the dependent variable (Syamsuddin & Damaianti, 2011; Sugiyono, 2016). The population comprises 175 Grade VIII learners (Sujarweni, 2014), with a sample of 65 learners from classes VIII F and VIII G (Arikunto, 2011). Data were collected with a Likert-scale questionnaire (Hadjar, 1999; Azwar, 2006) and validated using product-moment correlation (Nursalam, 2011). They were analyzed descriptively (Ridwan, 2010; Ridwan et al., 2009; Sugiyono, 2014; Supranto, 2008; Tiro, 2000) and

inferentially with the assistance of SPSS (Ghozali, 2005). The contribution of this article is empirical and contextual: it provides quantitative evidence on the role of Akidah Akhlak teachers' leadership in shaping learners' discipline in madrasah settings.

RESEARCH MOTHOD

This study used a quantitative ex post facto design with an explanatory orientation, in which the variables were not manipulated (Sugiyono, 2003), and a psychological approach (Adiputra et al., 2021). Research ethics followed the three Belmont principles: respect for persons, privacy and confidentiality, and justice (Sarosa, 2012). As the participants were Grade VIII learners who are still minors, the ethical procedures of this study were not limited to these three principles alone; the research was conducted after obtaining formal ethical clearance/permission from the school as the relevant institution, and data collection was carried out only after informed consent from the learners' parents/guardians and informed assent from the learners themselves, consistent with the Belmont principles stated above.

The study was conducted at MTs Negeri 1 Sidrap in the 2025/2026 academic year. The population comprised 175 Grade VIII learners in seven classes (Sujarweni, 2014), and the sample consisted of 65 learners (37%) from classes VIII F (n = 35) and VIII G (n = 30), selected through a cluster (class-based) random sampling technique, in which two of the seven available classes were randomly drawn as intact groups (Arikunto, 2011); this sample size was taken because it exceeded commonly used minimum sampling proportions for a population of this scale, so as to provide an adequate basis for both descriptive and inferential analysis (Arikunto, 2011). Data were collected with a closed questionnaire (Sugiyono, 2013) using a four-option Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree) (Azwar, 2006). Favorable items were scored 4 to 1 and unfavorable items 1 to 4 (Sugiyono, 2016), and documentation served as supporting data. The teachers' leadership competence scale (11 items) was based on the aspects in Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation No. 16 of 2010 (Menteri Agama RI, 2010) and was administered to the learners to capture their perceptions of their teachers' leadership competence; thus, the leadership competence variable in this study reflects learners' assessment of their teachers, not teachers' self-report or an independent/supervisor rating, and this level-of-analysis issue needs to be taken into account when interpreting the findings. The discipline scale (17 items) covered discipline related to time, place, and propriety, social norms, and religion (Rahman, 2012). Validity was tested with product-moment correlation, with an item valid when r-count exceeded r-table at $\alpha = 0.05$ (Nursalam, 2011). Reliability was tested with Cronbach's alpha, with a coefficient above 0.60 considered reliable (Sujarweni, 2014). Both scales met these criteria ($\alpha \approx 0.91$ for each).

Descriptive analysis used the range (Ridwan et al., 2009), the number of class intervals $K = 1 + 3.3 \log N$ (Sugiyono, 2014), class length (Supranto, 2008), and the mean and percentage (Tiro, 2000). Scores were categorized following Azwar (2006). Inferential analysis began with prerequisite tests, namely normality of the residuals and linearity, and then used simple linear regression ($\hat{Y} = a + bX$). The hypothesis was tested with a t-test at $\alpha = 0.05$ (Hasan, 2008), and all calculations were run in SPSS (Ghozali, 2005). It should be noted as a limitation of this study that both the independent variable (teachers' leadership competence) and the dependent variable (learners' discipline) were measured using questionnaires administered to the same respondents, namely the learners, through the same self-report Likert-scale method; this common source and common method of measurement may inflate the observed correlation between the two variables (common method bias), and this limitation should be taken into consideration when interpreting the regression results.

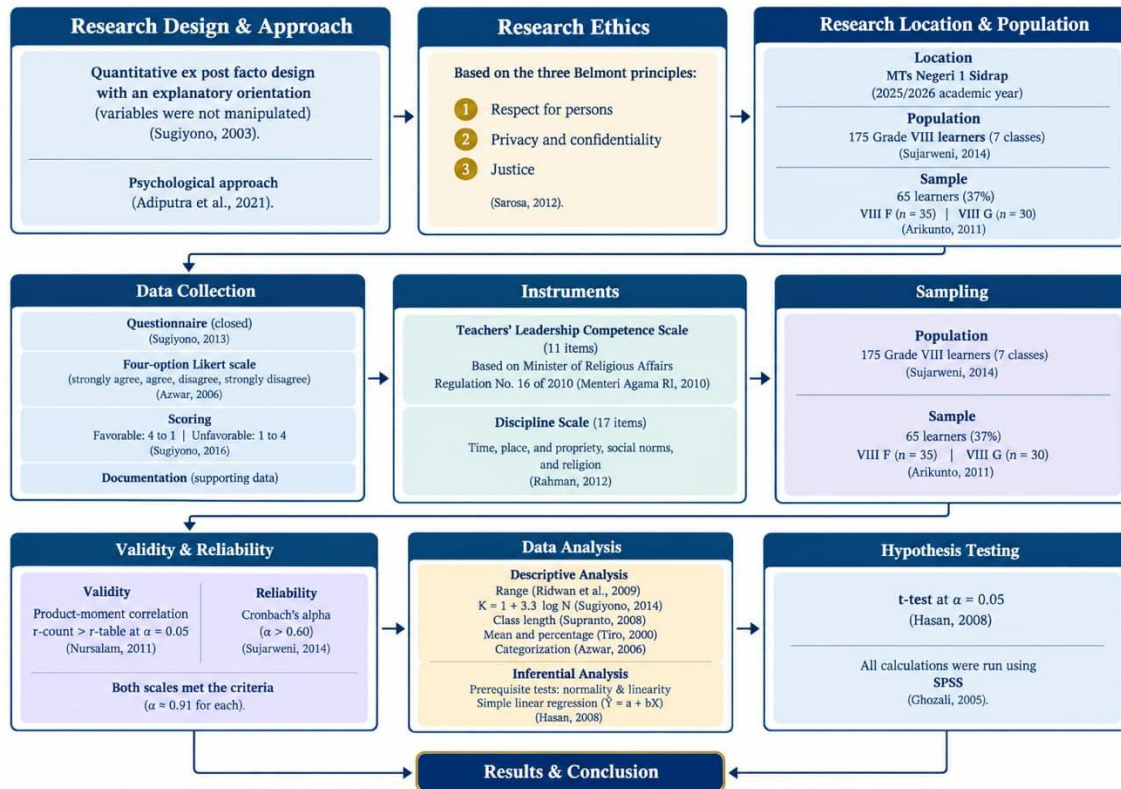


Figure 1. Research Methodology Framework

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Leadership competence of Akidah Akhlak teachers

The first research question concerned the level of the Akidah Akhlak teachers' leadership competence as perceived by the 65 Grade VIII learners. Total scores on the 11-item scale ranged from 17 to 44 (theoretical range 11 to 44), with a mean of 32.03 (SD = 7.26) and a median of 33 (Table 1). The mean item score was 2.91 on the 1–4 scale, and 69.2% of all responses fell in the "agree" or "strongly agree" options. The frequency distribution was not concentrated in a single interval. The modal intervals were 29–32 and 33–36 (15 learners each, 23.1%), followed by the top interval, 41–44 (12 learners, 18.5%).

Using the ideal-norm categorization of Azwar (2006), with cut-off scores of 22 and 33, seven learners (10.8%) rated their teachers' leadership competence as low, 25 (38.5%) as moderate, and 33 (50.8%) as high (Table 2). The mean therefore falls in the upper part of the moderate category. Using the sample-based rule ($M \pm 0.5$ and 1.5 SD; $M = 32$, $SD = 8$), the distribution was 2 low, 42 moderate, 20 high, and 1 very high, so the moderate category dominated. At item level, the differences were small. The highest-scoring item was inviting the school community to perform congregational midday prayer ($M = 3.09$), and the lowest was the item on advising and reprimanding students who violate rules ($M = 2.83$).

Learners' discipline

The second research question concerned learners' discipline. Total scores on the 17-item scale ranged from 27 to 68 (theoretical range 17 to 68), with a mean of 49.71 (SD = 10.97) and a median of 51. The mean item score was 2.92, and 67.1% of responses were in the "agree" or "strongly agree" options. The most frequent intervals were 51–56 and 57–62 (12 learners each, 18.5%). By the ideal-norm categorization (cut-off scores 34 and 51), four learners (6.2%) were in the low category, 28 (43.1%) in the moderate category, and 33 (50.8%) in the high category. By the sample-based rule ($M = 50$, $SD = 11$), the counts were 4 low, 38 moderate, 18 high, and 5 very high. As with leadership competence, the mean lies in the moderate category, near its upper boundary. The item-level pattern is consistent with the preliminary observations. The lowest-scoring items concerned performing the five daily prayers on time ($M = 2.71$), wearing the uniform according to school rules ($M = 2.77$), and arriving at school on time ($M = 2.78$). The highest-scoring item was submitting assignments on time ($M = 3.08$).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics ($N = 65$)

Variable	Items	Min–Max	M	SD	Median	Mean per item
Leadership competence (X)	11	17–44	32.03	7.26	33	2.91
Discipline (Y)	17	27–68	49.71	10.97	51	2.92

Table 2. Categorization based on ideal norms (Azwar, 2006)

Variable	Low	Moderate	High
Leadership competence (X)	7 (10.8%)	25 (38.5%)	33 (50.8%)
Discipline (Y)	4 (6.2%)	28 (43.1%)	33 (50.8%)

Effect of leadership competence on discipline

The third research question concerned whether leadership competence affects discipline. The instruments were reliable (Cronbach's $\alpha = .909$ for X and $.908$ for Y), and all corrected item–total correlations (X: $.576$ – $.711$; Y: $.399$ – $.737$) exceeded the critical value of $.244$ for $N = 65$ at $\alpha = .05$. The regression assumptions were met. Residuals were normally distributed (Lilliefors $p = .44$; Shapiro–Wilk $p = .34$), the relationship was linear (deviation from linearity $F(21, 42) = 0.80$, $p = .71$), the residual variance was homogeneous (Breusch–Pagan $p = .30$), and residuals showed no autocorrelation (Durbin–Watson = 2.11). Simple linear regression showed that leadership competence significantly predicted discipline, $F(1, 63) = 58.28$, $p < .001$ (Table 3). The regression equation was $\hat{Y} = 16.151 + 1.048X$, meaning that each one-point increase in leadership competence was associated with a 1.05-point increase in discipline. The correlation was positive and strong ($r = .693$, 95% CI $[.54, .80]$), and leadership competence explained 48.1% of the variance in discipline (adjusted $R^2 = .472$). The remaining 51.9% of the variance may be attributable to other factors not examined in this study, although this cannot be confirmed from the present data alone. The null hypothesis was rejected, and the hypothesis that leadership competence has a positive and significant effect on discipline was accepted.

Table 3. Simple linear regression of discipline on leadership competence

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
Constant	16.151	4.505		3.585	< .001
Leadership competence (X)	1.048	0.137	.693	7.634	< .001

Note. $R = .693$, $R^2 = .481$, adjusted $R^2 = .472$, $SEE = 7.969$, $F(1, 63) = 58.28$, $p < .001$.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the leadership competence of Akidah Akhlak teachers, the discipline of Grade VIII learners at MTs Negeri 1 Sidrap, and the effect of the former on the latter. Learners perceived their teachers' leadership competence at a moderate to fairly high level ($M = 32.03$, $SD = 7.26$). Their own discipline was at a similar level ($M = 49.71$, $SD = 10.97$), and in both cases the mean lay in the upper part of the moderate category. Discipline was weakest on timeliness-related behaviors, such as performing the five daily prayers on time, wearing the school uniform as required, and arriving at school on time. This shows that the level of both variables is fairly good but not yet optimal.

Leadership competence had a positive and significant effect on discipline ($r = .693$, $p < .001$), explaining 48.1% of its variance ($\hat{Y} = 16.151 + 1.048X$), so the hypothesis was accepted. The finding suggests that teachers who plan, organize, motivate, and guide the cultivation of religious practice in the school community tend to have learners who are more disciplined. The remaining 51.9% of the variance points to other influences, such as family, peers, and school rules. Madrasahs may therefore strengthen teacher leadership through role modeling, habituation, and school policy, while future research should test additional predictors, use larger and more varied samples, and examine whether the effect holds beyond non-flagship classes.

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