

Prophetic Leadership and Teacher Competence: A Quantitative Study in Indonesian Secondary Islamic and Public Schools

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ABSTRACT. Education in this country until now is still overshadowed by various problems. These multiple problems have serious consequences for the quality of education. In this case, the leadership aspect is part of the pillars supporting education. Prophetic leadership is the ideal form of leadership, which, of course, influences the quality of education, especially teacher competence. The author is interested in conducting a correlational study of prophetic leadership and teacher competence to examine how prophetic leadership relates to and contributes to teacher competence. The method used in this research is the quantitative correlation method. This research shows that prophetic leadership significantly influences teacher competence. Based on the results of the correlation test, both at MTsN 1 Serang City and at SMPN 1 Baros Serang Regency, the prophetic leadership of educational institution heads significantly contributes to PAI teachers' competency. Still, the degree of correlation differs between the two. The prophetic leadership of the head of the institution at SMPN 1 Baros, Serang Regency, shows a strong correlation. In contrast, at MTsN 1 Serang City, the correlation is moderate. Future research should include a larger, more diverse sample, examine longitudinal data, and consider additional qualitative dimensions to capture better how prophetic leadership influences teacher competence development across various educational settings. This study is limited to two academic institutions in Serang, making broad generalizations difficult. It also does not account for potential moderating factors such as institutional culture, teacher demographics, or leadership training experiences.

Keywords: *Prophetic Leadership, Educational Leadership, Teacher Competency.*



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INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia continues to face complex and persistent challenges that have become a central topic of academic discussion for decades. Issues such as teacher competence, work motivation, management, and moral degradation remain unresolved despite numerous reforms (Daulay et al., 2024; Radhi et al., 2025; Sholihah et al., 2024). Many scholars argue that one of the most decisive factors behind the success or failure of educational institutions lies in leadership (Hariadi et al., 2024; Nellitawati et al., 2024; Purwanto & Yuliana, 2025). Leadership serves as the core element that determines organizational effectiveness, influencing not only the work environment but also the overall quality of educational outcomes. In educational contexts, effective leadership has been proven to enhance institutional performance, academic climate, and the realization of educational quality (Aghaei et al., 2022; Madkan et al., 2025; Rokhimawan et al., 2025).

In Islamic scholarship, leadership occupies a fundamental position as a moral and managerial responsibility rooted in the Qur'anic concept of khalifah (QS. Al-Baqarah: 30). Leadership in Islam

embodies the duty to uphold divine guidance in every domain of life, including education (Ho et al., 2025; Ningsih et al., 2025). Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) exemplified an ideal model of leadership that was holistic, accepted, and proven (Al-Olaqi, 2025; Mokhtar et al., 2025). His leadership covered all spheres of human life—education, politics, law, economics, and social welfare—and remains relevant for contemporary governance and institutional management. Modern scholars conceptualize this model as prophetic leadership, emphasizing moral integrity, wisdom, and servant leadership (Doğan, 2025; Qian et al., 2026).

Empirical studies in Indonesia in 2020–2025 show an increase in interest in researching prophetic leadership in educational institutions (schools, madrasas, Islamic boarding schools, and universities) (Widiana et al., 2023; Yuliana et al., 2023, 2025). Recent qualitative and quantitative studies report that the implementation of prophetic values (humanization, liberation, and transcendence) is positively correlated with motivation, teacher performance, and a school culture that supports learning — e.g. studies on Muhammadiyah institutions, madrasahs, and Islamic schools that describe how the practice of prophetic leadership improves teacher responsibility and performance as well as the formation of a conducive organizational culture (Dewantoro & Susilo, 2025). These studies generally use case study and survey designs in the context of Islamic education in Indonesia and explain that prophetic leadership plays an important role in the development of teachers' pedagogical and professional competencies (Nguyen & Pham, 2025).

Empirical support from international literature on spiritual/ethical leadership (which is often equivalent or relevant to prophetic leadership attributes such as moral vision, integrity, and transcendental motivation) reinforces these findings: indexed studies (e.g., in reputable journals) report that spiritual leadership is positively related to teacher well-being, trust in leaders, and better professional outcomes—reported mechanisms include increased intrinsic motivation, sense of calling, and trust that mediate the relationship between leadership style and teacher well-being/competence (Doğan, 2025; Hariyani et al., 2025; Javid et al., 2024; Kertamukti et al., 2025). These international findings provide comparative evidence that the spiritual-moral dimension of leadership can be an important mediator in improving teachers' professional competence in various contexts.

Previous research on educational leadership has predominantly focused on transformational, transactional, or instructional leadership models (Asmendri et al., 2024; Kertamukti et al., 2025; Parhan et al., 2024). While these frameworks have contributed valuable insights into teacher performance and school improvement, they often neglect the moral and spiritual dimensions central to Islamic education (Nurdi & Ahmad, 2025; Qasserras, 2024; Ramadan et al., 2025; Shittu et al., 2025). Only a limited number of studies have explored prophetic leadership and its potential impact on teacher competence, especially through comparative studies between sekolah (under the Ministry of Education) and madrasah (under the Ministry of Religious Affairs). This gap reveals the need to recontextualize leadership studies within the moral-ethical values of Islam, which are essential for nurturing both professional competence and spiritual character among educators.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the correlation between prophetic leadership and teacher competence within two leading educational institutions—MTsN 1 Kota Serang and SMPN 1 Baros Kabupaten Serang. By comparing these institutions, which represent the dual educational system in Indonesia, this research seeks to identify whether prophetic leadership contributes significantly to the professional and moral competencies of teachers. The findings are expected to enrich the theoretical discourse on Islamic educational leadership and offer practical insights for improving educational quality across both sekolah and madrasah contexts.

This paper tests the hypothesis that prophetic leadership positively correlates with teacher competence. In doing so, it contributes to filling a scholarly gap in Islamic educational management studies, demonstrating that leadership grounded in prophetic values can serve as an effective framework for building professional, ethical, and spiritually grounded educators in the Indonesian education system.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative correlational research approach to identify and analyze the relationship between two continuously measured quantitative variables. This method allows researchers to determine the extent to which changes in one variable are associated with changes in another within a measurable statistical framework. The correlational quantitative approach not only examines the strength and direction of relationships between variables but also provides an empirical understanding of interaction patterns within educational settings. Through correlation analysis, this study seeks to uncover fundamental relationships that can serve as the basis for data-driven decision-making in educational quality development (Creswell, 2014).

The research was conducted in two leading educational institutions: MTsN 1 Kota Serang and SMPN 1 Baros, Serang Regency. Each institution represents two distinct educational systems in Indonesia: madrasahs under the Ministry of Religious Affairs and schools under the Ministry of Education. MTS N 1 Kota Serang has a population of 1,090 students, while SMPN 1 Baros has 921 students. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, which involves selecting participants based on specific criteria relevant to the study's objectives. From each school, 36 students were selected who had significant interaction and learning experience with Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, ensuring that the collected data would be valid and representative.

The variables in this study consisted of an independent variable (X), namely the prophetic leadership of school principals, and a dependent variable (Y), namely the competence of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers. Through correlation analysis, the study seeks to explore the strength and direction of the relationship between these two variables within both Islamic and general educational contexts. The findings are expected to provide valuable contributions to enhancing the effectiveness of school leadership in fostering teacher professionalism and to serve as a foundation for developing a measurable, prophetic-value-based educational management model oriented toward improving overall academic quality.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Prophetic Leadership in Educational Institutions

Prophetic leadership in the educational context is a leadership model based on the prophetic values exemplified by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which include *šiddiq* (integrity and honesty), *amanah* (trustworthiness and responsibility), *tabligh* (effective communication), and *fathanah* (wisdom and intelligence). A head of an educational institution who embodies these values is not merely an administrative manager but also a moral and spiritual guide for teachers. This leadership approach fosters a harmonious, collaborative, and value-oriented work climate within the institution.

This study examines the extent to which the prophetic leadership of principals and madrasah heads contributes to the competence of Islamic Education (PAI) teachers in two different educational institutions—MTsN 1 Kota Serang and SMPN 1 Baros Kabupaten Serang.

Research Findings at MTsN 1 Kota Serang

Data Description

Based on questionnaire data collected from 36 respondents, the total score for prophetic leadership was 1825, and the total score for PAI teacher competence was 1969. The average percentage scores are presented below.

Table 1. Percentage of Prophetic Leadership and PAI Teacher Competence at MTsN 1 Kota Serang

Aspect	Total Score	Percentage (%)
Prophetic Leadership	1825	67.59
PAI Teacher Competence	1969	72.93

Source: Primary data processed using SPSS, 2025.

Normality and Correlation Tests

A normality test was performed to determine the suitability of the data for parametric analysis.

Table 2. Normality Test Results (Kolmogorov-Smirnov)

Variable	Sig. Value	Interpretation
Prophetic Leadership	0.936	Normally Distributed
PAI Teacher Competence	0.936	Normally Distributed

The Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between the two variables.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Test Results – MTsN 1 Kota Serang

Variable (Prophetic Leadership)	X	Variable Y (PAI Teacher Competence)	Sig. (2-tailed)	r-value	Interpretation
Prophetic Leadership		PAI Teacher Competence	0.001	0.529	Moderate Positive Correlation

This indicates that there is a significant and positive relationship between prophetic leadership and PAI teacher competence. In other words, the stronger the implementation of prophetic leadership values, the greater the improvement in teachers' pedagogical, professional, and spiritual competencies.

Research Findings at SMPN 1 Baros Kabupaten Serang

Data Description

From 37 respondents, the total score for prophetic leadership was **2066**, and the total score for PAI teacher competence was **2003**, as shown below.

Table 4. Percentage of Prophetic Leadership and PAI Teacher Competence at SMPN 1 Baros

Aspect	Total Score	Percentage (%)
Prophetic Leadership	2066	74.45
PAI Teacher Competence	2003	72.18

Source: Primary data processed using SPSS, 2025.

Normality and Correlation Tests

Table 5. Normality Test Results (Kolmogorov-Smirnov)

Variable	Sig. Value	Interpretation
Prophetic Leadership	0.154	Normally Distributed
PAI Teacher Competence	0.154	Normally Distributed

Table 6. Pearson Correlation Test Results – SMPN 1 Baros Kabupaten Serang

Variable (Prophetic Leadership)	X	Variable Y (PAI Teacher Competence)	Sig. (2-tailed)	r-value	Interpretation
Prophetic Leadership		PAI Teacher Competence	0.000	0.751	Strong Positive Correlation

These results indicate that prophetic leadership at SMPN 1 Baros is more deeply internalized and has a stronger impact on the teachers' professional and spiritual performance.

Comparative Analysis between MTsN 1 Kota Serang and SMPN 1 Baros Kabupaten Serang

A comparison of both institutions shows a distinct variation in leadership impact, as summarized below.

Table 7. Comparison of Results between MTsN 1 Kota Serang and SMPN 1 Baros Kabupaten Serang

Institution	Prophetic Leadership (%)	PAI Teacher Competence (%)	r-value	Correlation Category
MTsN 1 Kota Serang	67.59	72.93	0.529	Moderate
SMPN 1 Baros Kabupaten Serang	74.45	72.18	0.751	Strong

The correlation difference of **0.222** suggests that prophetic leadership exerts a stronger influence on PAI teacher competence in the public school (SMP) context compared to the madrasah.

Data Visualization

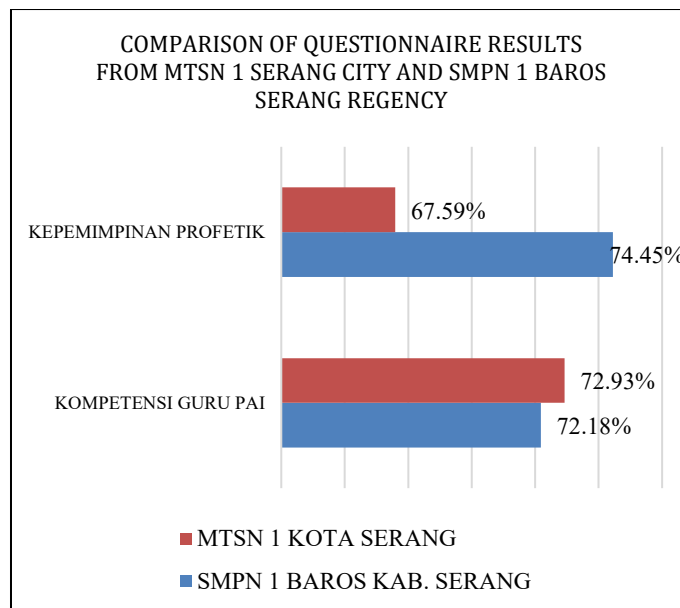


Figure 1. Comparison of Prophetic Leadership and PAI Teacher Competence

The visualization clearly demonstrates that prophetic leadership is stronger in the public school, whereas teacher competence is slightly higher in the madrasah.

Analysis and Interpretation

The study reveals two important findings: 1) Prophetic leadership in public schools (SMPN 1 Baros) exhibits a stronger correlation with teacher competence than in the madrasah. This suggests that the internalization of prophetic values is not determined by an institution's religious identity but by the managerial quality and organizational culture fostered by the leader. 2) Although madrasahs have a religious foundation, they have not fully transformed prophetic values into a systemic leadership framework that effectively enhances teacher competence.

These findings imply that prophetic leadership training should be developed across both general and religious educational institutions to ensure that prophetic values are integrated into managerial and pedagogical practices.

Discussion

The discussion section will delve into the implications of these findings, comparing them against existing literature on leadership in Islamic educational contexts and general pedagogical effectiveness (Dewantoro & Susilo, 2025). This analysis will also explore how the specific manifestations of prophetic leadership, such as accountability and wisdom, contribute to teacher development and overall school performance, drawing parallels with other leadership models like servant and transformational leadership (Subaşı et al., 2026; Yang et al., 2026).

Furthermore, it will address the challenges and opportunities in integrating prophetic values with contemporary digital literacy and management of online learning environments within Islamic educational leadership (Johari et al., 2024; Miftah et al., 2024). This comprehensive discussion will illuminate the nuanced interplay between spiritual guidance and practical administration, offering insights into fostering a value-driven educational culture.

The research will also integrate concepts from contemporary organizational leadership theory and classical Islamic educational philosophy to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding these dynamics. Such an approach will highlight how ethical and moral considerations, central to Islamic spiritual leadership, can enhance academic excellence and spiritual development within madrasahs (Asrohah et al., 2025; Ruhullah & Ushama, 2025).

It further examines the integration of Islamic spiritual leadership with modern e-leadership strategies, emphasizing how these ethical frameworks can optimize educational quality in madrasahs. This integration is particularly crucial in the digital age, where e-leadership, combining spiritual values with technological capabilities, is essential for creating adaptive and responsive school cultures (Leu, 2025; Syamsi et al., 2024).

This includes exploring best practices in transforming Islamic values-based institutions through spiritual leadership and integrating Islamic ethical values into institutional governance (Khanom et al., 2025). This study seeks to provide practical recommendations for educational leaders to cultivate effective learning environments rooted in Islamic principles and contemporary pedagogical practices (Siswadi et al., 2025). It also aims to demonstrate how such leadership can foster an environment where teachers, particularly those in Islamic Education, can achieve higher levels of competence by embodying Islamic work ethics and fostering creativity (Nabhan & Munajat, 2023) (Rana et al., 2021).

This approach ultimately supports both individual creativity and adaptive performance within educational settings, contributing to improved organizational outcomes (Shittu et al., 2025; Subaşı et al., 2026; Yuliana et al., 2023). This encompasses motivating employees to achieve their highest potential and fostering positive change through intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration (Falah et al., 2025). Moreover, this framework extends to adaptive leadership principles, which are critical for navigating complex educational landscapes and fostering organizational innovation through enhanced self-efficacy among educators (Rofiq et al., 2024).

This holistic perspective underscores the transformative potential of prophetic leadership in enhancing not only teacher competence but also the broader organizational commitment and job performance within educational institutions. Such leadership styles inherently stimulate employee voice behavior, a critical component for driving adaptive performance and organizational improvement, by encouraging staff to challenge the status quo constructively and propose beneficial changes (Mustofa et al., 2025).

This encouragement for proactive engagement subsequently cultivates a culture of continuous improvement and innovation, directly impacting pedagogical practices and overall institutional effectiveness. This comprehensive examination aims to provide actionable insights for developing sustainable leadership models that foster both spiritual growth and academic excellence within Islamic educational institutions (Hamzah et al., 2024; Sunardi et al., 2024). This study specifically examines how Islamic work ethics, as espoused by prophetic leadership, can significantly improve job performance and foster organizational identification among teachers.

The integration of these ethics enhances employee engagement and organizational citizenship behavior, which are vital for both institutional reputation and employee motivation, ultimately leading to improved in-role and extra-role performance, as well as greater life satisfaction among staff (Chaman & Siddiqui, 2023). Furthermore, the study posits that such leadership profoundly influences employees' adaptive performance by cultivating an innovation-friendly climate and fostering psychological capital, thereby addressing a less-explored area within academic literature (Mufrihah et al., 2025).

Future research could therefore delve deeper into the specific mechanisms through which prophetic leadership fosters these outcomes, potentially exploring mediating variables such as psychological safety, perceived organizational support, and employee well-being (Katsaros, 2025). Moreover, an examination of how prophetic leadership influences adaptive leadership and organizational innovation through mechanisms such as change self-efficacy would provide a more nuanced understanding of its impact on educational institutions (Chughtai et al., 2024).

Interpretation of Key Findings

The observed correlation between prophetic leadership and PAI teacher competence at MTsN 1 Kota Serang suggests a statistically significant relationship, where higher levels of prophetic leadership are associated with enhanced teacher capabilities. This alignment is particularly noteworthy given that Islamic higher education institutions are central to improving human resource quality in regions like Central Java (Nabhan & Munajat, 2023). This underscores the critical role of ethically oriented leadership in shaping an effective and motivated teaching force, ultimately leading to improved student outcomes and institutional excellence (Urooj et al., 2024).

This finding aligns with broader research indicating that leadership styles grounded in strong ethical frameworks positively influence employee engagement and organizational citizenship behavior, which are crucial for both institutional reputation and employee motivation (Chaman & Siddiqui, 2023). This demonstrates how values-based leadership can foster a harmonious and comfortable atmosphere, positively impacting employee engagement and overall institutional performance (Wiguna et al., 2023). This further reinforces the notion that leaders embodying fairness and competence can significantly boost employee motivation and enthusiasm, thereby enhancing their professional performance (Pasaribu et al., 2023).

Moreover, the positive correlation indicates that principals and madrasah heads who exemplify *ṣiddiq*, *amanah*, *tablīgh*, and *fathanah* inspire teachers to develop their professional skills more effectively, creating a synergistic environment for educational advancement (Barokah et al., 2025; Musa et al., 2024; Sabariah et al., 2025). This reciprocal relationship between prophetic leadership and teacher competence is critical for driving institutional innovation and fostering a culture of continuous improvement, as proactive leadership often inspires proactive behavior among followers (Zhang & Cui, 2022). This dynamic is further supported by findings that emphasize how effective leadership, particularly when characterized by strong ethical foundations, can significantly enhance work engagement and foster innovative behaviors among employees.

This suggests that such leadership models not only uplift individual capabilities but also contribute substantially to organizational innovation and adaptive performance within educational settings (Chughtai et al., 2024). This positive influence of prophetic leadership on teacher competence is further mediated by the creation of a supportive and inspiring work environment, which encourages teachers to embrace new methodologies and continuously refine their pedagogical approaches.

This framework, therefore, not only elevates individual teacher performance but also cultivates a broader culture of excellence and continuous professional development within the institution, leading to enhanced educational outcomes. Consequently, this virtuous cycle strengthens the institution's capacity for innovation and its ability to adapt to evolving educational demands, thereby solidifying its position as a center for academic and moral development.

Prophetic Leadership and Teacher Competence: A Comparative Perspective

This section extends the analysis to SMPN 1 Baros Kabupaten Serang, juxtaposing its findings with those from MTsN 1 Kota Serang to highlight nuances in the manifestation and impact of prophetic leadership across different institutional contexts. By comparing these distinct environments, we aim to discern commonalities and variations in how prophetic values translate into tangible improvements in teacher competence, thereby offering a more comprehensive understanding of this leadership model's applicability and effectiveness. This comparative approach facilitates the identification of contextual factors that either enhance or impede the efficacy of prophetic leadership, providing valuable insights for tailored leadership development programs (Balqis et al., 2025; Ezzani et al., 2023).

This methodological strategy will also illuminate how institutional culture and demographic characteristics might moderate the relationship between leadership style and teacher performance, offering a richer empirical foundation for future research. Such an analysis will also consider how adaptive leadership and resilience-building strategies, often intertwined with prophetic principles, further contribute to teacher development and overall educational excellence within these distinct settings (Pane et al., 2024).

Moreover, this comparative lens allows for the identification of best practices and adaptable strategies for implementing prophetic leadership principles in diverse educational environments, thereby informing policy and practice (Idrus & Abd. Ghani, 2023). Specifically, we will examine the correlation between prophetic leadership and PAI teacher competence at SMPN 1 Baros Kabupaten Serang using similar statistical methodologies to those applied at MTsN 1 Kota Serang to facilitate direct comparison.

This will enable a robust assessment of whether the strong positive correlation observed in the madrasah context is similarly present in a public school environment (Halomoan et al., 2024). This comparative analysis will critically evaluate the generalizability of prophetic leadership's efficacy across varying institutional structures and administrative frameworks. The data gathered from SMPN 1 Baros Kabupaten Serang will be subjected to the same rigorous statistical analyses, including normality and correlation tests, to ensure comparability with the MTsN 1 Kota Serang findings. The subsequent section will detail the data description, normality test results, and Pearson correlation coefficients for SMPN 1 Baros Kabupaten Serang, allowing for a direct and nuanced comparison with the MTsN 1 findings. This meticulous approach will highlight whether the observed relationships between prophetic leadership and teacher competence are universal or context-dependent within the Indonesian educational landscape.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that the contribution of prophetic leadership to the competence of Islamic Education teachers (PAI) varied across institutions. At MTsN 1 Kota Serang, the prophetic leadership aspect (67.59%) was lower than the PAI teacher competence aspect (72.93%), while at SMPN 1 Baros Serang Regency, prophetic leadership (74.45%) exceeded the PAI teacher competence level (72.18%). The difference in prophetic leadership between both institutions reached 6.86% in favor of SMPN 1 Baros, whereas the difference in teacher competence was 0.75% higher in MTsN 1 Kota Serang. Correlation tests indicated significant relationships in both institutions, yet the strength of correlation differed: SMPN 1 Baros showed a strong correlation ($r = 0.751$), whereas MTsN 1 Kota Serang had a moderate correlation ($r = 0.529$). These findings suggest that schools not explicitly grounded in Islamic institutional identity can demonstrate stronger prophetic leadership practices than madrasahs.

This study contributes to the academic discourse by demonstrating that prophetic leadership is not confined to religiously oriented institutions. It challenges the conventional assumption that madrasahs naturally exhibit higher prophetic leadership due to their Islamic foundation. Furthermore, this research reinforces and extends prior studies on the relationship between leadership style and teacher competence by incorporating the prophetic leadership dimension—an integrative model inspired by the moral and ethical values of Prophet Muhammad SAW—into the context of modern educational management.

This study is limited to two educational institutions in Serang, making broad generalization difficult. It also does not account for potential moderating factors such as institutional culture, teacher demographics, or leadership training experiences. Future research should include a larger and more diverse sample, explore longitudinal data, and consider additional qualitative dimensions to better capture how prophetic leadership influences teacher competence development in various educational settings.

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