

THE INFLUENCE OF ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY, RESPONSIVENESS, AND RELIABILITY ON THE INTEGRITY OF MADRASAH PRINCIPALS

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effects of accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and reliability on the integrity of madrasah principals in Binjai City, both partially and simultaneously, from the perspective of Islamic Education Management. This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design. The population consisted of 127 madrasah principals at the RA, MI, MTs, and MA levels under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Binjai City. A total of 96 respondents were selected using proportionate stratified random sampling and the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error. Primary data were obtained through a Likert-scale questionnaire distributed to madrasah principals, while secondary data were derived from madrasah institutional documents under the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Binjai City and relevant scholarly literature on leadership integrity, educational governance, and Islamic Education Management. The data were analyzed using descriptive-inferential statistics and multiple regression analysis. The findings indicate that accountability is the strongest predictor of madrasah principals' integrity. Transparency and responsiveness also have positive and significant effects, whereas reliability does not have a significant partial effect. Simultaneously, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and reliability have a significant effect on the integrity of madrasah principals, with the model explaining 58.4% of the variance. This study concludes that the integrity of madrasah principals is more strongly shaped by accountable, transparent, and responsive governance practices than by personal reliability alone. Therefore, strengthening the integrity of madrasah principals should be directed toward improving responsibility, information openness, responsiveness to stakeholders' needs, and leadership consistency based on the Islamic value of *amanah*.

Keywords

Accountability, Integrity, Reliability, Responsiveness, Transparency.



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INTRODUCTION

Leadership integrity among madrasah principals in Binjai City is an important issue in Islamic Education Management because it reflects a gap between the expectation of trust-based leadership and the realities of institutional governance. Madrasahs at the RA, MI, MTs, and MA levels are expected not only to achieve academic quality but also to uphold honesty, responsibility, transparency, and exemplary conduct. However, the misuse of educational funds at a State Islamic Senior High School in Binjai during the 2020–2022 fiscal period, involving alleged fictitious activities, improper procurement, and fraudulent official travel claims that caused approximately IDR 1.09 billion in state losses, highlights serious challenges to leadership integrity.

This case indicates that the integrity of madrasah principals concerns not only personal morality but also their capacity to manage educational institutions responsibly. In modern leadership studies, integrity is understood as consistent ethical behavior and the ability of leaders to maintain congruence between their words and actions across various organizational situations (Arifin & Takrim, 2021). Integrity also serves as the foundation of organizational trust, which is developed through honesty, the fulfillment of commitments, and leaders' moral responsibility (Putera, 2026; Wijanarko et al., 2021). It can therefore be understood as a multidimensional construct encompassing moral, behavioral, and relational dimensions. Consistent with Moorman's perspective, as summarized (Karthikeyan, 2017), leadership integrity is influenced by several elements, namely accountability, responsiveness, transparency, accessibility, promise fulfillment, and reliability. These elements indicate that integrity derives not only from an individual's personal moral qualities but also from organizational governance practices.

In the educational context, various studies have demonstrated that accountability and transparency are associated with leadership quality and public trust, although challenges remain in financial reporting, internal supervision, and the disclosure of information regarding the management of educational funds (Hakim & Enjelita, 2025; Adil et al., 2023). Furthermore, transparency, accountability, and community participation have been shown to contribute to the quality of education (Nuriyawati et al., 2025). Responsiveness is also an important dimension of leadership integrity because it reflects a leader's ability to respond appropriately and meaningfully to the needs, aspirations, criticism, and concerns of stakeholders (Din & Zhang, 2023). Meanwhile, reliability reflects consistency, trustworthiness, the ability to fulfill commitments, and congruence between a leader's words and actions as components of leadership credibility and behavioral

integrity (Cao et al., 2024). Accordingly, within the madrasah context, the integrity of madrasah principals should not be viewed solely as an individual moral characteristic, but also as the outcome of interactions among accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and reliability in everyday leadership practices.

Studies on integrity in leadership have developed considerably over the past decade, with a particular emphasis on ethics, trust, and leadership behavior. (Enwereuzor et al., 2020) found that leader integrity plays an important mediating role in the relationship between ethical leadership and an organization's ethical climate, thereby contributing to increased workplace trust and ethical behavior. Similarly, Ete et al. (2021) demonstrated that leaders' behavioral integrity has a significant effect on employees' trust and organizational engagement.

In the educational context, Thomas (2019) explained that perceptions of leader integrity directly influence subordinates' evaluations of leadership quality. Recent studies have demonstrated the conceptual development of integrity as a multidimensional construct. Meanwhile, Meriç & Öz (2025) found that organizational transparency has a direct influence on organizational trust, which constitutes an important component of the integrity construct. Furthermore, (Supriadi et al., 2021) revealed that good governance in educational institutions, encompassing accountability and transparency, contributes to the quality of school principals' decision-making.

Previous studies on leadership integrity have largely adopted partial approaches by linking integrity to specific variables, such as trust, ethical leadership, or organizational performance. Most have also focused on general organizations or the business sector, while research in Islamic educational institutions, particularly madrasahs, remains limited. In addition, integrity has often been treated as a single variable or an outcome without simultaneously integrating governance dimensions into a comprehensive model. This gap highlights the need to examine the combined effects of accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and reliability on the integrity of madrasah principals. Therefore, the novelty of this study lies in developing a good governance-based leadership integrity model that integrates these four dimensions within the context of Indonesian madrasahs.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory survey design to examine the effects of accountability (X_1), transparency (X_2), responsiveness (X_3), and reliability (X_4) on the

integrity of madrasah principals (X_5), both partially and simultaneously. The study was conducted in public and private madrasahs under the supervision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Binjai City, encompassing the Raudhatul Athfal (RA), Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs), and Madrasah Aliyah (MA) levels. The study population consisted of 127 madrasah principals. A sample of 96 principals was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error and selected through proportionate stratified random sampling to ensure proportional representation across all educational levels. The sample comprised 64 RA principals, 10 MI principals, 15 MTs principals, and 7 MA principals.

Primary data were collected using a 125-item closed-ended questionnaire on a five-point Likert scale, with 25 items measuring each variable. Integrity was assessed through honesty, ethical conduct, consistency, responsibility, exemplary leadership, fairness, and objectivity. Accountability covered administrative, financial, and academic responsibility, stakeholder involvement, and regulatory compliance. Transparency included information disclosure, openness in policies and programs, communication, access to information, and decision-making. Responsiveness was measured through response speed, solution appropriateness, accessibility, proactive behavior, interaction, and empathy, while reliability covered performance consistency, accuracy, commitment fulfillment, decision-making dependability, and procedural compliance. The instrument was evaluated through expert judgment, Pearson's product-moment validity testing, and reliability testing. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression in SPSS 25 after multicollinearity and heteroscedasticity tests. Hypotheses were tested using the t-test, F-test, and coefficient of determination.

The conceptual framework of the study is presented as follows:

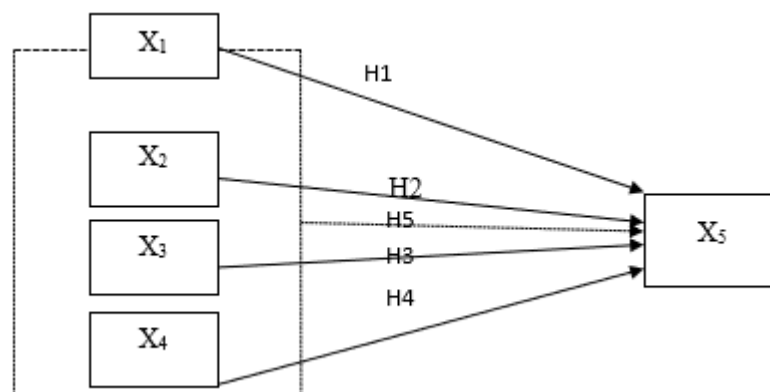


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

The hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

1. **H₀₁:** Accountability has no significant effect on the integrity of madrasah principals.
H₁₁: Accountability has a significant effect on the integrity of madrasah principals.
2. **H₀₂:** Transparency has no significant effect on the integrity of madrasah principals.
H₁₂: Transparency has a significant effect on the integrity of madrasah principals.
3. **H₀₃:** Responsiveness has no significant effect on the integrity of madrasah principals.
H₁₃: Responsiveness has a significant effect on the integrity of madrasah principals.
4. **H₀₄:** Reliability has no significant effect on the integrity of madrasah principals.
H₁₄: Reliability has a significant effect on the integrity of madrasah principals.
5. **H₀₅:** Accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and reliability have no significant simultaneous effect on the integrity of madrasah principals.
H₁₅: Accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and reliability have a significant simultaneous effect on the integrity of madrasah principals.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The findings were based on questionnaire data from 96 madrasah principals in Binjai City. The study examined accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and reliability as independent variables and the integrity of madrasah principals as the dependent variable. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, category tendency analysis, classical assumption tests, multiple regression, dominant indicator analysis, and simultaneous testing to describe each variable and assess its influence on leadership integrity. The results of the descriptive statistical analysis indicate that all variables had relatively high score distributions. Accountability had a mean score of 107,864, transparency 105,854, responsiveness 106,791, reliability 106,447, and integrity 110,802. These results indicate that, in general, respondents perceived governance practices and the integrity of madrasah principals in Binjai City positively. Integrity had the highest mean score, whereas transparency had the lowest. This finding suggests that although madrasah principals were generally perceived as demonstrating a high level of integrity, aspects related to information disclosure, policy transparency, communication, and decision-making still require further improvement.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Variable	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance
accountability	96	32	93	125	10355	107,864	9,928	98,581
transparency	96	42	83	125	10162	105,854	11,309	127,915
responsiveness	96	31	94	125	10252	106,791	10,272	105,514
reliability	96	31	94	125	10219	106,447	10,539	111,071
integrity	96	29	96	125	10637	110,802	10,195	103,950

Source: Calculation SPSS 25

The category tendency analysis showed that the integrity of madrasah principals was distributed across low, moderate, and high categories. A total of 25 respondents, or 26.0%, were classified in the low-integrity category, 46 respondents, or 47.9%, were in the moderate category, and 25 respondents, or 26.0%, were in the high category. These results indicate that nearly half of the respondents perceived the integrity of madrasah principals to be at a moderate level. This finding is important because it suggests that integrity has not yet become a fully dominant leadership characteristic among madrasah principals in Binjai City. Although integrity is evident, it still needs to be strengthened through more accountable, transparent, responsive, and consistent governance practices.

For the accountability variable, 3.1% of respondents were classified in the low category, 71.9% in the moderate category, and 25.0% in the high category. This distribution indicates that accountability was generally perceived to be at a moderate level. Most madrasah principals were considered to have implemented accountability practices, although these practices had not yet reached a high level for the majority of respondents. In this study, accountability encompassed administrative accountability, financial accountability, academic performance accountability, stakeholder involvement, and compliance with regulations and standards.

The transparency variable also showed a moderate tendency. A total of 8.3% of respondents were classified in the low category, 66.7% in the moderate category, and 25.0% in the high category. These findings indicate that transparency remains an important aspect requiring further improvement. Although most madrasah principals were perceived as reasonably transparent, the proportion of respondents in the high category remained limited. This suggests that openness in financial information, policies and programs, communication, information accessibility, and decision-making processes needs to be further strengthened in madrasah leadership practices.

Responsiveness demonstrated the strongest concentration in the moderate category compared with the other variables. A total of 1.0% of respondents were classified in the low category,

74.0% in the moderate category, and 25.0% in the high category. These findings indicate that madrasah principals were generally perceived as capable of responding to stakeholders' needs, aspirations, and concerns. However, the predominance of the moderate category also suggests that responsiveness has not yet become an optimal leadership practice. Madrasah principals still need to improve the speed of their responses, the appropriateness of proposed solutions, accessibility, the ability to anticipate problems, and the quality of interaction and empathy.

Reliability also exhibited a predominantly moderate pattern. A total of 2.1% of respondents were classified in the low category, 74.0% in the moderate category, and 24.0% in the high category. These results indicate that the reliability of madrasah principals was generally perceived as satisfactory, although it had not yet reached an optimal level. In this study, reliability encompassed performance consistency, precision and accuracy, the ability to fulfill promises and commitments, dependability in decision-making, and compliance with procedures and standards.

Table 2. Variable Categorization

Variable	Low	Moderate	High	Sum
Integrity	25 res/26,0%	46 res/47,9%	25 res /26,0%	96/ 100%
Accountability	3 res / 3,1%	69 res / 71,9%	24 res/ 25,0%	96 / 100%
Transparency	8 res/ 8,3%	64 res/ 66,7%	24 res / 25,0%	96 / 100%
Responsiveness	1 res / 1,0%	71 res/ 74,0%	24 res / 25,0%	96 / 100%
Reliabilitas	2 res/ 2,1%	71 res/ 74,0%	23 res/ 24,0%	96 / 100%

Before hypothesis testing was conducted, the regression model was first evaluated using classical assumption tests. The multicollinearity test results showed that all tolerance values were greater than 0.10 and all Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were below 10. Accountability had a tolerance value of 0.206 and a VIF value of 4.852; transparency had a tolerance value of 0.198 and a VIF value of 5.060; responsiveness had a tolerance value of 0.201 and a VIF value of 4.986; and reliability had a tolerance value of 0.151 and a VIF value of 6.634. These values indicate that the independent variables did not exhibit serious multicollinearity.

The heteroscedasticity test results also showed significance values greater than 0.05 for all independent variables. Accountability had a significant value of 0.094, transparency 0.076, responsiveness 0.977, and reliability 0.212. Therefore, the regression model satisfied the assumption of homoscedasticity and was considered appropriate for hypothesis testing.

The multiple regression analysis produced the following regression equation: Madrasah Principal Integrity = 0.336 + 0.830 Accountability + 0.536 Transparency + 0.301 Responsiveness – 0.213

Reliability + e

The equation indicates that accountability, transparency, and responsiveness had positive regression coefficients, whereas reliability had a negative regression coefficient. However, the significance test results showed that only accountability, transparency, and responsiveness had significant effects on the integrity of madrasah principals. Reliability did not have a significant effect on the integrity of madrasah principals.

Table 3. Significance Test

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Description
Constant	0,336	0,390	-	0,862	0,391	Not Significant
Accountability	0,830	0,186	0,660	4,455	0,000	Significant
Transparency	0,536	0,166	0,323	3,820	0,015	Significant
Responsiveness	0,301	0,149	0,284	2,349	0,031	Significant
Reliability	-0,213	0,176	-0,181	-1,210	0,229	Not Significant

The first hypothesis test showed that accountability had a positive and significant effect on the integrity of madrasah principals. The standardized beta coefficient was 0.660, the t-value was 4.455, and the significance level was $p < 0.001$. Since the significance level was lower than 0.05, the hypothesis stating that accountability affects the integrity of madrasah principals was supported. This finding indicates that higher levels of accountability are associated with administrative responsibilities. The second hypothesis test demonstrated that transparency had a positive and significant effect on the integrity of madrasah principals. The standardized beta coefficient was 0.323, the t-value was 3.820, and the significance level was 0.015. These results indicate that transparency makes a significant contribution to the development of leadership integrity. Madrasah principals who openly communicate policies, programs, financial information, and decision-making processes tend to be perceived as honest, fair, and trustworthy leaders.

The third hypothesis test showed that responsiveness had a positive and significant effect on the integrity of madrasah principals. The standardized beta coefficient was 0.284, the t-value was 2.349, and the significance level was 0.031. This finding indicates that the ability of madrasah principals to respond to the needs, concerns, aspirations, and complaints of teachers, educational staff, students, parents, and community members can strengthen perceptions of their integrity. Responsiveness reflects not only the technical speed of providing responses but also moral sensitivity, empathy, and a service-oriented approach.

The fourth hypothesis test showed that reliability did not have a significant effect on the integrity of madrasah principals. The standardized beta coefficient was -0.181 , the t -value was -1.210 , and the significance level was 0.229 . Since the significance level was greater than 0.05 , the hypothesis stating that reliability affects integrity was not supported. This result does not imply that reliability is unimportant. Rather, it suggests that reliability, when understood solely in terms of consistency, accuracy, procedural compliance, and the ability to fulfill commitments, is not sufficiently strong to explain the integrity of madrasah principals without the support of accountability, transparency, and responsiveness.

The fifth hypothesis was tested using the F -test. The results showed that accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and reliability simultaneously had a significant effect on the integrity of madrasah principals. The calculated F -value was 31.985 , with a significance level of $p < 0.001$. Since the significance level was lower than 0.05 , the regression model was statistically significant. The R -squared value of 0.584 indicates that the four independent variables collectively explained 58.4% of the variance in the integrity of madrasah principals. The remaining 41.6% was explained by other factors outside the research model, such as organizational culture, spiritual leadership, work climate, supervisory systems, leadership experience, and personal morality.

Table 4. F Test

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regresi	13,872	4	3,468	31,985	0,000
Residual	9,867	91	0,108	-	-
Sum	23,740	95	-	-	-

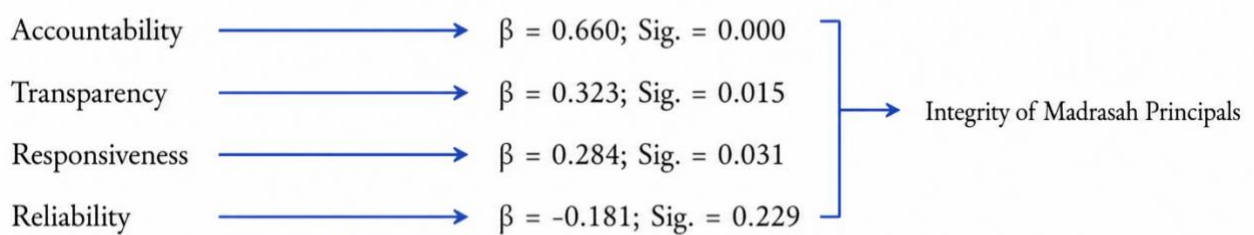
The dominant indicator analysis also provided important information regarding the strongest indicator within each independent variable. For accountability, the most dominant indicator was academic performance accountability, with a factor loading of 0.961 . For transparency, the most dominant indicator was communication and dissemination, with a factor loading of 0.966 . For responsiveness, the most dominant indicator was the quality of interaction and empathy, with a factor loading of 0.998 . For reliability, the most dominant indicator was precision and accuracy, with a factor loading of 0.982 .

These findings indicate that the integrity of madrasah principals is closely associated with their ability to account for academic performance, communicate policies effectively, interact empathetically with stakeholders, and perform their duties with precision and accuracy.

Table 5. Indicator Analysis

Variable	Dominant Indicator	Code	Loading Factor
Accountability	Academic Performance Accountability	IDAK3	0,961
Transparency	Communication and Dissemination	IDTR3	0,966
Responsiveness	Quality of Interaction and Empathy	IDRE5	0,998
Reliability	Precision and Accuracy	IDREL2	0,982

The overall findings can be summarized in the following figure.



Simultaneous effect: $F = 31.985$; $\text{Sig.} = 0.000$; $R \text{ Square} = 0.584$

Figure 2. Research Findings

The figure shows that accountability is the strongest predictor of the integrity of madrasah principals, followed by transparency and responsiveness. Reliability has a negative coefficient direction but does not have a significant effect. Simultaneously, the four variables have a significant effect in explaining the integrity of madrasah principals.

Discussion

Accountability had a positive and significant effect on the integrity of madrasah principals and was the strongest predictor, with a standardized beta coefficient of 0.660. This indicates that stakeholders primarily assess principals' integrity through their accountability for programs, decisions, academic performance, financial management, stakeholder involvement, and regulatory compliance. Academic performance accountability emerged as the strongest indicator, showing that accountability is evaluated not only through administrative orderliness but also through principals' ability to improve instruction, guide teachers, implement the curriculum, support student achievement, and ensure the effectiveness of academic programs. Thus, leadership integrity in madrasahs is closely linked to educational outcomes.

This finding is also relevant to Wang et al. (2022), who emphasized that school principals face accountability pressures from various stakeholders, including the government, teachers, parents, students, and the community. In the context of madrasahs, these accountability pressures are even stronger because moral and religious expectations accompany them. Furthermore, Putra & Suryanawa (2022) found that accountability and transparency have positive and significant effects on the effectiveness of School Operational Assistance fund management. This indicates that accountability in the management of educational resources can enhance trust and improve the effectiveness of school programs. (Ramdhansyah et al., 2023) also demonstrated that dimensions of good governance, particularly accountability, participation, and transparency, have positive effects on school budget performance. Consistent with these findings, Rohman et al. (2024) emphasized that transparency and accountability in the management of school funds are important determinants of the effectiveness and efficiency of school activities. Therefore, the dominant effect of accountability identified in this study can be understood from the fact that stakeholders primarily assess the integrity of madrasah principals through their ability to account openly and credibly for institutional programs, resource utilization, academic performance, and organizational decisions.

Transparency had a positive and significant effect on the integrity of madrasah principals, with a standardized beta coefficient of 0.323 and a significance value of 0.015. This indicates that greater openness in managing information, programs, policies, communication, and decision-making strengthens stakeholders' perceptions of leadership integrity. Transparency helps stakeholders understand policy rationales, institutional programs, and resource use, thereby reducing suspicion, misunderstanding, and resistance.

Communication and dissemination emerged as the dominant indicators, showing that transparency depends not only on the availability of information but also on its clear and effective delivery to teachers, educational staff, madrasah committees, parents, and the community. Therefore, transparency requires openness, clarity, accessibility, and communicative leadership. This finding is consistent with Aisyah & Pusparini (2023), who found that transparent communication promotes openness to change, both directly and through organizational trust.

(Gamerdinger et al., 2023) also demonstrated that transparency is closely associated with credibility and trust. However, transparency does not automatically generate trust when the credibility of the information source does not support it. This finding is relevant to the madrasah context because madrasah principals must not only disclose information but also ensure that it is

communicated honestly, consistently, and accountably. Furthermore, Kumalasari et al. (2024) emphasized that transparency in digital communication can increase public engagement and communication effectiveness. This finding supports the argument that transparency should be participatory and involve stakeholders rather than merely consist of the one-way delivery of information. (Dong et al., 2025) explained that transparent communication encompasses the provision of meaningful information, participation, and accountability in explaining decisions. These three dimensions can reduce uncertainty and build trust. This perspective is consistent with the dominant indicator identified in the present study, namely communication and dissemination, which indicates that the transparency of madrasah principals is largely determined by the quality of information communicated to teachers, educational staff, madrasah committees, parents, and community members. (Alsharairi et al., 2025) emphasized that transparent, dialogical, and responsive leadership communication can enhance engagement and positive communication behavior in higher education institutions. Therefore, the positive effect of transparency on the integrity of madrasah principals can be explained by the fact that stakeholders assess leadership integrity through information disclosure, clarity of communication, policy dissemination, and the ability to explain the basis of decision-making in a credible manner.

(Meriç & Öz, 2025) found that school transparency had a positive, significant, and strong relationship with organizational trust. In their study, the dimensions of school transparency included participation in decision-making, information flow, and accountability. The findings of the present study are also supported by (Tosun & Çelik, 2024), who demonstrated that organizational transparency is associated with organizational trust, organizational health, and school effectiveness. These findings indicate that information disclosure in educational institutions can strengthen relationships between leaders and members of the school community while improving institutional effectiveness.

Transparent madrasah principals are more likely to be trusted because stakeholders can observe the processes underlying their decisions. This finding is also consistent with Msangya (2025), who emphasized that fairness, integrity, transparency, and accountability are essential values in ethical school leadership. In the present study, transparency serves as a concrete mechanism through which ethical leadership is practiced in madrasahs.

Nevertheless, the effect of transparency was weaker than that of accountability. This finding indicates that openness alone is insufficient to establish integrity. Stakeholders require not only

access to information but also assurance that the information is followed by responsible action. Transparency creates opportunities for trust, whereas accountability strengthens that trust through concrete responsibility and accountability. Therefore, transparency and accountability should be developed simultaneously. A madrasah principal who is transparent but not accountable merely provides information without assuming responsibility for it. Conversely, a principal who is accountable but not transparent may create suspicion because stakeholders lack a clear understanding of the leadership processes involved.

Responsiveness had a positive and significant effect on the integrity of madrasah principals, with a standardized beta coefficient of 0.284 and a significance value of 0.031. This indicates that stakeholders perceive principals as having greater integrity when they respond effectively to the needs, complaints, aspirations, and problems of the madrasah community. Integrity is therefore reflected not only in formal policies and reports but also in daily interactions and problem-solving practices.

The quality of interaction and empathy was the strongest indicator of responsiveness, with a factor loading of 0.998. This finding shows that responsiveness is judged not merely by speed but also by principals' willingness to listen, understand, communicate respectfully, and respond empathetically. Thus, empathy is an important element of moral leadership, and responsive principals are perceived as leaders who care for, serve, and protect the interests of the madrasah community.

This finding is supported by Vikaraman et al. (2021), who identified a strong relationship between ethical school leadership and trust in school leaders. Responsiveness strengthens integrity because it demonstrates that the moral values of madrasah principals are translated into concrete services for stakeholders. This finding is also consistent with previous studies that have positioned responsiveness, empathy, and the quality of interaction as essential elements of educational leadership. (Manke et al., 2025) emphasized that empathy in school leadership plays an important role in building close relationships between leaders and teachers, understanding the needs of school community members, and developing a shared institutional vision. Their findings reinforce the present study by showing that the responsiveness of madrasah principals is evaluated not only by the speed of their responses but also by their ability to listen to, understand, and respond empathetically to the needs of the madrasah community.

The findings are also supported by Dhomroh et al. (2024), who demonstrated that principals' servant leadership is characterized by listening, empathy, openness, and community building. These characteristics are highly relevant in the madrasah context because madrasah principals serve not only as administrators but also as moral leaders who are directly involved in the everyday concerns of teachers, students, parents, and community members. (Daly et al., 2025) further emphasized that effective school leadership must be responsive to the diverse and complex needs of students. Therefore, the positive effect of responsiveness on the integrity of madrasah principals can be explained by the fact that stakeholders assess integrity not only through formal reports or written policies but also through the quality of principals' presence, concern, empathy, and ability to resolve problems humanely. The effect of responsiveness was weaker than that of accountability and transparency. This suggests that responsiveness must be supported by clear responsibility and openness. A madrasah principal may respond quickly to a problem, but when the response is neither accountable nor transparent, it may not fully strengthen perceptions of integrity. For example, a rapid decision made without a clear explanation may raise questions among stakeholders.

Reliability did not have a significant effect on the integrity of madrasah principals, with a standardized beta coefficient of -0.181 and a significance value of 0.229 . Because the effect was not statistically significant, the negative coefficient should not be interpreted as indicating that reliability weakens integrity. Rather, reliability did not emerge as a strong independent predictor in the research model. This finding is consistent with (Herttalampi et al., 2022) who found that leaders' moral behavior was more strongly associated with leader-follower relationship quality than consistency. Thus, reliability understood solely as precision, accuracy, procedural compliance, and work consistency is insufficient to explain the leadership integrity of madrasah principals.

This result can also be explained by the findings of Javed et al. (2021), who showed that leaders' behavioral integrity affects employees' trust and willingness to voice their concerns through psychological safety and trust in the leader. This indicates that leadership integrity is determined not only by the technical consistency of leaders' actions but also by their ability to build trust, create a sense of security, and establish open relationships with organizational members. The finding, therefore, suggests that integrity has a stronger moral dimension than mere procedural dependability.

Similarly, a meta-analysis conducted by Özdoğru & Sarier (2024) in school contexts found that principals' ethical leadership was strongly associated with organizational trust, organizational

justice, commitment, motivation, and teachers' job satisfaction. Accordingly, the nonsignificant effect of reliability in the present study may indicate that madrasah stakeholders regard dependability as a basic requirement of the principal's position. Integrity, however, is perceived more strongly when moral values, fairness, openness, responsibility, and concern for members of the madrasah community accompany such dependability.

The fifth finding concerns the simultaneous effects of accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and reliability on the integrity of madrasah principals. The calculated F-value of 31.985, with a significance level of $p < 0.001$, indicates that the overall research model was statistically significant. The R-squared value of 0.584 shows that the four variables collectively explained 58.4% of the variance in the integrity of madrasah principals. This result indicates that multiple dimensions of governance shape integrity. Although reliability did not have a significant partial effect, it remained a component of the overall governance model that collectively contributed to explaining variations in integrity. These simultaneous findings support the conceptualization of leader integrity as a multidimensional construct. Integrity is not developed through a single factor. In the madrasah context, integrity is shaped by leaders' ability to account for their actions, willingness to demonstrate openness, sensitivity in responding to stakeholders' needs, and consistency in performing their duties. Each variable represents a distinct dimension of leadership. Accountability represents responsibility, transparency represents openness, responsiveness represents service and concern, and reliability represents consistency and precision.

The findings are consistent with (Fatmawati et al., 2024), who emphasized that strengthening good university governance in Islamic higher education institutions requires managerial transformation involving leadership, strategic planning, financial management, supervision, and institutional accountability. In the madrasah context, this suggests that the integrity of madrasah principals cannot be explained solely by personal morality but must also be understood in relation to governance systems that enable them to act responsibly, transparently, responsively, and consistently in carrying out their institutional mandate.

Furthermore, (Fatkuroji et al., 2025) showed that implementing academic information systems can support the realization of good university governance by strengthening transparency, accountability, and participation. This finding is relevant because it demonstrates that the governance of Islamic educational institutions requires institutional mechanisms that facilitate the systematic flow of information, accountability, and stakeholder involvement. (Hutahaeen et al.,

2023) Also found that good governance and public trust play important roles in increasing community participation in e-government services. Accordingly, the significant simultaneous effects of accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and reliability in the present study indicate that the integrity of madrasah principals is a leadership construct developed through a combination of responsibility, openness, service sensitivity, and sound governance.

(Prasetya, 2023) found that good governance, encompassing responsiveness, accountability, and transparency, affects public trust. This finding reinforces the results of the present study by suggesting that the integrity of madrasah principals should be understood as the outcome of integrated governance practices rather than merely as an individual moral attribute. The findings are also consistent with (Burhanudin et al., 2022), who demonstrated that trust in local government during crisis management is influenced by accountability, responsiveness, transparency, and the use of information technology. In the madrasah context, these principles are relevant because madrasah principals are expected not only to be accountable but also to be transparent, responsive, and capable of providing stakeholders with accessible and comprehensible information. (Suhardi et al., 2023) further demonstrated that accountability, transparency, and participation simultaneously affect public trust in village fund management. This finding strengthens the argument that institutional trust and integrity are developed through multidimensional governance mechanisms. In addition, Almaaitah et al. (2025) showed that transparency, accountability, and responsiveness have positive effects on public trust and that institutional legitimacy mediates the relationship between good governance and public trust. Therefore, the significant simultaneous effects of accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and reliability found in this study may be interpreted as evidence that the integrity of madrasah principals is a leadership construct shaped by a combination of responsibility, openness, service sensitivity, work consistency, and moral legitimacy in carrying out their institutional mandate.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the integrity of madrasah principals in Binjai City cannot be understood solely as an individual moral quality but also as the outcome of leadership governance practices implemented in an accountable, transparent, and responsive manner. Accountability, transparency, and responsiveness were shown to constitute important foundations for strengthening the integrity of madrasah principals because they provide mechanisms for

accountability, information disclosure, and sensitivity to the needs of the madrasah community. Meanwhile, reliability remains a supporting element that should be situated within a framework of moral values and sound governance so that leadership consistency does not merely reflect procedural compliance but also becomes an integral part of the mandate of Islamic educational leadership.

Overall, this article demonstrates that efforts to strengthen the integrity of madrasah principals should be directed toward developing good governance-based leadership that is aligned with the values of Islamic Education Management. A principal with integrity is not merely a leader who demonstrates personal consistency, but also one who is able to account for institutional policies, communicate information transparently, respond to stakeholders' needs, and foster public trust in the madrasah. Accordingly, the findings of this study make a theoretical contribution to the development of scholarship on leadership integrity in Islamic education and offer practical implications for the professional development of madrasah principals so that they may become more trustworthy, credible, and respected by the community.

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