

ENHANCING LEADERSHIP KNOWLEDGE THROUGH THE MINI MBA FOR SCHOOL LEADERS TRAINING PROGRAM

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Abstract: Leadership knowledge is crucial for school leaders to build strong teams and achieve institutional goals. When this foundational knowledge is lacking, progress is often hindered. This study evaluates the effectiveness of the "Mini MBA for School Leaders" program in enhancing participants' understanding of leadership principles. Using a one-group pretest-posttest design with a sample of 29 school leaders, we measured the change in leadership knowledge following the training intervention. Data were analyzed using a normalized gain (N-gain) score. The results showed an average N-gain score of 0.59, indicating the program was "moderately effective" in increasing knowledge. These findings suggest that condensed, targeted training programs like the Mini MBA can be a valuable tool for professional development in the education sector, offering practical pathways to improve school management.

Keywords: *Leadership, Mini MBA, School Principals, School Management, Professional Development.*

Abstrak: Pengetahuan kepemimpinan sangat penting bagi para pemimpin sekolah untuk membangun tim yang kuat dan mencapai tujuan institusional. Ketika pengetahuan dasar ini kurang, kemajuan seringkali terhambat. Penelitian ini mengevaluasi efektivitas program "Mini MBA for School Leaders" dalam meningkatkan pemahaman peserta tentang prinsip-prinsip kepemimpinan. Dengan menggunakan desain pretest-posttest satu kelompok pada sampel yang terdiri dari 29 pemimpin sekolah, perubahan pengetahuan kepemimpinan diukur setelah intervensi pelatihan. Data dianalisis menggunakan skor peningkatan yang dinormalisasi (N-gain). Hasil menunjukkan bahwa skor rata-rata N-gain sebesar 0,59, yang mengindikasikan bahwa program ini memiliki efektivitas "sedang" dalam meningkatkan pengetahuan. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa program pelatihan yang ringkas dan terfokus seperti Mini MBA dapat menjadi sarana yang berharga untuk pengembangan profesional di sektor pendidikan, menawarkan jalur praktis untuk meningkatkan manajemen sekolah.

Kata Kunci: *Kepemimpinan, Mini MBA, Kepala Sekolah, Manajemen Sekolah, Pengembangan Profesi*

INTRODUCTION

The driving force of an organization or institution depends on the leadership capabilities of its leaders. Leadership capability is the ability to influence others, subordinates, or groups (Hutahaean, 2021). Analogously, the operational success of schools and educational institutions is fundamentally contingent upon the quality of their leadership. If leaders possess proficient leadership knowledge and skills, the operational activities of the organization/institution, in this case, the school or educational institution, will run smoothly.

To create high productivity and work ethic within the school environment to achieve the institution's vision and mission, leaders who can mobilize existing resources in the school are needed. The principal is the highest leader in the school. The leadership style adopted significantly influences—and may even determine—the school's development (Syafriada, 2015). According to Yuliana (2023), the principal is not only an important instrument for school development but also an agent of change for an institution towards a more positive direction comprehensively. The principal is a professional official in the school organization tasked with managing all school resources to achieve educational goals.

According to Linenburg and Ornstein, teacher performance is greatly influenced by school management factors, namely the principal's roles such as leadership role, managerial role, curriculum, and instructional role (Mahfud, 2021). Activities that occur in schools, such as effective teaching and learning processes (KBM) that convey noble and positive values, certainly require good collaboration and cooperation between teachers and students, parents, and the surrounding community, all under the coordination of the principal. The principal's control here acts as a manager in the educational institution (Syafriada, 2015). This aligns with the Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia No. 25 of 2024, article 9, which stipulates that the Principal's workload is entirely dedicated to executing: a) managerial tasks; b) entrepreneurship development; and c) supervision of teachers and educational staff.

To acquire leadership knowledge for principals, training can be undertaken, such as the Principal Competency Improvement Program accessible on guru.kemendikbud.go.id through learning topics relevant to school leadership competencies with the Cohort Based Courses (CBCs) model via a Learning Management System (LMS). Additionally, the Salman ITB Education Development Institute (LPP) offers a training program for school management titled Mini Master of Business Administration (MBA) for School Leaders. The Mini MBA program is a concise MBA program emphasizing essential materials needed by companies or corporations (Arohman, 2023). One of the discussion modules in this training is Leadership.

Despite extensive evidence supporting the importance of educational leadership (e.g., Syafriada, 2015; Yuliana, 2023), limited research exists on the specific impact of concise, executive training, such as a "Mini MBA," for Indonesian school leaders. Current literature often emphasizes general leadership theories or extended development initiatives. This research aims to fill this void by quantitatively assessing a focused, short-term training program intended to enhance the leadership acumen of school principals and managers. The contribution of this research lies in its practical assessment of an accessible professional development model and its effectiveness, offering valuable data for educational institutions seeking efficient ways to upskill their leadership teams.

Therefore, here is the structure of this paper. Following the introduction section is the literature review section. Next, the research method and result discussion show the core of this research. Last, the conclusion section sums up and gives the notes for further research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

a. Leadership and Principals

Leadership originates from the word "leader," which means a guide, chief, or head. There are many definitions of leadership. In essence, leadership involves the process of leading, directing, influencing, mobilizing, and guiding others to achieve common goals. This aligns with what Irham Fahmi (2018) stated: leadership is the science of how to direct and influence others to do something to achieve goals. Leadership is an effort by someone to encourage their subordinates to cooperate in achieving organizational goals (Sri Indriani, 2021). Sherly (2020; 175) defines leadership as the skill to influence individuals or groups being led, able to provide encouragement in carrying out tasks and work, and able to evaluate the progress made by their ranks.

Meanwhile, in an organization or school institution as a place for receiving and giving lessons, the principal is defined as a leader (Sitti Aisyah, 2017). The principal has the responsibility to lead, guide, motivate, and supervise staff and teachers in carrying out teaching and learning activities (Sri Indriani, 2021). In relation to the educational mission, the principal's leadership can be defined as someone who has the responsibility to encourage and guide Education Personnel and Teachers in achieving the predetermined goals of education and teaching (Asabri, 2020).

Leadership and principals are closely related. The principal is a status or position given to a competent individual to lead, while leadership is the knowledge that a leader needs to possess to manage a school institution.

Thus, it can be concluded that principal leadership is the effort of a leader to control and evaluate the teaching and learning process in the school so that the goals of the educational institution can be achieved effectively and efficiently.

b. Leadership Models

In line with the paradigm related to the knowledge a leader needs to possess, to manage and control the organization they lead, a leader needs to understand leadership styles and perform the role of a leader. In the aspect of leadership models, there are various references for leading an organization or group. Several leadership models can be applied by a leader, including:

c. Servant Leadership

This leadership model was introduced by Greenleaf (1977), where he emphasized that a leader should focus on serving subordinates rather than pursuing individualistic power. Servant leaders must strive to focus on the empowerment and development of individuals within the organization. Andreas Avelino Christian, Ag. Sri Purnami (2024) state that Servant Leadership is a leadership approach that prioritizes the interests of subordinates over the personal interests of a leader. This aligns with what Ramadhan (2024) says, that Servant Leadership prioritizes the welfare and competency development of subordinates. This concept then reinforces that leaders who want to apply this leadership model must be

able to serve their subordinates with the aim of improving their welfare and work quality. What is prioritized in Servant Leadership is where a leader possesses empathy, listening skills, and concern for the welfare of subordinates, and always supports their personal development (Van Dierendonck, 2011).

d. Situational Leadership Model

The situational leadership model developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1969) views that there is no leadership style suitable for all situations. When someone becomes a leader, they must adjust their leadership style to the subordinates' ability to carry out the assigned tasks. Leaders must be able to see the extent of the team's readiness in carrying out their tasks and work; by knowing the team's readiness, the leader can determine rational targets to be given to the team (Sitti Aisyah, 2017). In this leadership model, there are at least four things that can be applied: directing, supporting, coaching, and delegating. The application of this leadership model greatly depends on the specific conditions of an organization (Northouse, 2021).

e. Authentic Leadership Model

Authentic leadership is a leadership model that characterizes a leader who, in interacting with subordinates, greatly emphasizes originality and transparency as a leader. Authentic leaders must have the ability to build close relationships with their team and always show integrity and the values they adhere to in their actions and decisions consistently (Avolio & Walumbwa, 2014; Luthans & Avolio, 2015). Authentic Leadership is a leadership style approach by integrating positive behavior, self-awareness, consistency, and honesty in the organizational environment (Avolio, et al. 2004 in Ihsan, 2021). Full awareness, understanding, and honesty towards values and beliefs, and having a strong ability to build good relationships with the team, are also characteristics of authentic leadership (Fatimatus Zahroh, et al. 2023).

f. Digital Leadership Model

Responding to the very rapid development of technology also influences the development of leadership models. One that has emerged in facing the technological era is the digital leadership model. The characteristic of digital leadership is a leader who is capable of using technology in leading subordinates and teams. By focusing on the implementation and digital transformation within an organization, this leadership model can be effective and efficient in achieving organizational goals (Tulungen, et al. 2022). A leader who adopts this leadership style must always adapt to technological changes quickly and constantly focus on innovation and managing teams through digital platforms (Li, et al. 2022; Wang & Zhan, 2021).

g. Transformational Leadership Model

Transformational leadership is a leadership style that requires a leader to inspire and motivate subordinates and teams so they reach their best potential. Transformational leaders are not only responsible for providing direction but also for guiding and focusing on the vision, mission, and individual development so that transforming the organization towards a more advanced direction can be achieved (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Leaders who apply this leadership style must be charismatic, have a high level of intellect, and believe that all subordinates they lead play an important role in the organization's progress (Jamilatul Hasanah, et al. 2023). This leadership style shows that leaders must be able to

increase team awareness of organizational goals and be able to create positive changes in organizational processes and culture so that organizational goals can be achieved (Wang, et al. 2018).

h. School Education Management

Education management is a management model applied to educational environments such as educational institutions, schools, universities, etc. This arrangement includes human resources, students, curriculum, community relations, and budget (Andreas Avelino Christian, Ag. Sri Purnami, 2024), where all these elements are interrelated. Education management includes planning, realization, budgeting supervision processes, and evaluation; in carrying out education management, it is very necessary to utilize the existing education system from human resources to other resources (Mahmudah & Putra, 2021). The principle of education management is the process of managing and allocating resources in educational institutions (Ammiruddin Tumanggor, et al. 2021).

School education management means the effort to organize the educational process in schools by referring to the management of existing resources in the school (Ahmad Khoirudin, et al. 2023). In implementing school education management, the utilization of all school resources is crucial, including human resources, budget, educational implementation procedures, materials, tools, and marketing, so that the school management process can be carried out well (Amka, 2021).

School education management needs to be implemented by considering the strategies that will be used to achieve the expected quality of education. Andreas Avelino Christian, Ag. Sri Purnami (2024) states that factors that can drive the achievement of school education quality include: socialization of planned programs, conducting SWOT analysis, problem-solving, efforts to improve quality, and evaluating the implementation of school programs. Program evaluation is carried out by paying attention to the effectiveness of the implemented program (Hidayat & Syam, 2020). School success can be measured by what has been achieved. Thus, the measurement of education management quality can be done by measuring how well and beneficially the programs initiated by the school are implemented (Irwan Fathurrochman, et al. 2022).

i. Relationship between Leadership Models and the Quality of School Education Management

To create good quality school education management, leaders need to consider what leadership style is ideal to apply in schools so that the vision, mission, and predetermined goals can be realized. Therefore, to create good quality education management in schools, one of the important indicators is the role of the leader. Siregar (2020) reveals that for good school education management to occur, leaders who have ideal leadership standards are needed to carry out important roles, because they must be able to create a vision and direct all school resources as well as inspire and motivate staff and teachers, and also set high standards in carrying out school education management. To achieve good school education quality, an effective leadership model is needed. On the other hand, in this regard, a leader tends to be required to combine various leadership styles in aligning the goals of the organization or school with the resources owned (Nisa, 2022).

The role of the leader in the process of implementing school education management is crucial because, in the context of improving the quality of school education, leaders must

understand the shortcomings and identify the potential of the organization. Thus, by understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the organization, leaders will know what leadership model is appropriate to apply in achieving organizational goals.

The reviewed models, from Servant and Situational to Digital and Transformational leadership, collectively illustrate the complex skill set required of modern educational leaders. Effective school management necessitates a flexible approach that incorporates service, adaptability, authenticity, and technological fluency. The Mini MBA program at the center of this study was designed to provide foundational knowledge across these critical domains, equipping school leaders with the theoretical groundwork needed to navigate their demanding roles. Based on the principle that targeted training enhances professional knowledge, the program is expected to improve participants' understanding of core leadership concepts. Therefore, this research will test the following hypothesis:

H1: Participation in the Mini MBA for School Leaders program will lead to a significant increase in leadership knowledge.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a pre-experimental design to assess the impact of the training intervention. Specifically, a one-group pretest-posttest method was used, which involves measuring the dependent variable (leadership knowledge) before and after the treatment is administered to a single group of subjects (Sugiyono, 2014). This design is suitable for evaluating the effectiveness of a program in a naturalistic setting when a control group is not feasible (Sugiyono, 2014).

The participants were 29 school leaders (principals and top management) enrolled in the "Mini MBA for School Leader Batch 3" program (Held in March 2024). Participants were selected based on their enrollment in the program, specifically for sub-topics related to (1) personal and (2) organizational transformation and leadership (Arohman, 2023). The instrument used for data collection was a leadership knowledge test developed for the program. The test consisted of 40 multiple-choice questions covering the core topics of the training: Personal and Organizational Transformation and Leadership. The same test was administered as a pretest before the training and as a posttest after its completion. Drawing on the research instrument used by Arrohman (2023) and Poon et al., (2022), subject matter experts from LPP Salman ITB and the Kalla Business Institute collaborated to adapt and refine the instrument to ensure content validity. To determine the effectiveness of the training program, the pretest and posttest scores were analyzed using the normalized gain (N-gain) formula (Hake, 1998; Kurniawan et al., 2021; Sugiyono, 2014). The N-gain measures the extent of knowledge improvement, accounting for the pre-existing knowledge level of each participant. The resulting score was interpreted according to the categories proposed by Hake (1999): <0.3 (Low), $0.3-0.7$ (Medium), and >0.7 (High) (Hake, 1998; Kurniawan et al., 2021).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

It has been explained that the goal of the Mini MBA program is that by participating fully in this training, participants are expected to develop insights and skills and improve competencies in the managerial field by providing knowledge and equipping them with both

business and management knowledge as well as other materials needed by participants, namely principals and top management (Arohman, 2023). Based on the organizers' evaluation results, several modifications are needed, one of which is the leadership discussion topic, which was previously specific to Islamic leadership, is now made more general. The Mini MBA for School Leaders batch 3 program series is divided into 10 topics or modules with a total learning duration of 84 hours. This research focuses on topics (1) Personal and (2) Organization Transformation and Leadership with a total duration of 14 hours, held over 2 days.

Before the workshop began, participants were given a pretest administered in a gamified digital platform, Quizizz. The pretest consisted of 40 questions. Then, on the first day after the pretest, participants were given material to align the training objectives to ensure everyone was on the same page and to create an interactive learning atmosphere. The material was presented using various methods, including discussion, demonstration and examples, problem-solving, and lectures. The first day's material covered the meaning of transformation, paradigm/mindset, and organizational levels.

On the second day, the topics and materials presented included: Human capital mindset, leadership levels, situational leadership, decision-making styles, Maslow's Motivation Theory, Effective Leadership, Prophetic Leadership, and Society 5.0 Trends. To conclude the previous topic discussions, participants were given a final test or posttest.

Table 1. Processing of pretest and posttest results

Pretest and Posttest Result Data					
No participants	pretest	posttest	N-gain score	information	N-gain score (%)
1	15	26	0.44	medium	44.00
2	19	27	0.38	medium	38.10
3	23	26	0.18	low medium	17.65
4	19	27	0.38	high	38.10
5	15	34	0.76	medium	76.00
6	24	35	0.69	high	68.75
7	21	40	1.00	medium	100
8	12	25	0.46	high	46.43
9	16	36	0.83	medium	83.33
10	10	24	0.47	low	46.67
11	22	25	0.17	medium	16.67
12	21	33	0.63	low	63.16
13	19	22	0.14	high	14.29
14	19	37	0.86	medium	85.71
15	15	26	0.44	medium	44.00
16	16	28	0.50	medium	50.00
17	18	33	0.68	high	68.18
18	17	38	0.91	high	91.30
19	17	38	0.91	medium	91.30
20	25	34	0.60	low	60.00
21	24	24	0.00	high	0.00
22	23	40	1.00	high	100.00
23	28	40	1.00	high	100.00
24	20	40	1.00	high	100.00

25	15	37	0.88	medium	88.00
26	17	24	0.30	low	30.43
27	15	22	0.28	high	28.00
28	28	40	1.00	low	100.00
29	18	24	0.27	medium	27.27
Mean			0.59	Medium	59.22

After obtaining pretest and posttest data, the increase in workshop participants' learning outcomes was determined using the normalized gain (n-gain) formula. Based on the data processing, the improvement results varied, with all showing positive N-Gain scores. The improvements varied: 6 participants obtained N-gain scores of less than 0.3 in the "low" category, 12 participants with scores between 0.3 and 0.7 were in the "medium" category, and 11 participants with scores greater than 0.7 were in the "high" category. The average N-gain score was in the medium category.

Based on the data scores above, it reinforces that the presentation of material on the specific topics of knowledge can improve the level of leadership knowledge. The method used was quite effective, as supported by the average N-Gain percentage of 59.22%, which means that the method used was quite effective in improving leadership knowledge (H1 is supported).

Table 2. N-Gain Score Interpretation and Division

Gain Score (g)	Percentage (%)	Interpretation	Category	Source
$g < 0.3$	$< 40\%$	Ineffective	Low	Hake, (1998); Kurniawan et al., (2021)
$0.3 \leq g < 0.7$	40–75%	Less/Quite Effective	Medium	Hake, (1998); Kurniawan et al., (2021)
$g \geq 0.7$	$> 75\%$	Effective	High	Hake, (1998); Kurniawan et al., (2021)

This leadership knowledge is significant for school and educational foundation leaders; indeed, its role is crucial. With this leadership knowledge, top leaders should be able to lead their schools or foundations in a clear direction. Leadership helps them formulate a strong vision-mission and communicate it to all elements: teachers, students, parents, staff, and even the surrounding community. This is in line with Wijaya (2023) who states that leadership greatly influences employee engagement, because with an ethical and moral leader, employees will be more enthusiastic and have a fervent desire to help the company achieve its goals. Ultimately, employee engagement will create reliable performance, thereby improving institution performance as well. In addition, teachers and staff need to be led, supported, and motivated. Good leadership helps leaders empower teachers, develop their potential, and create a productive work atmosphere, so these impacts have a positive effect on the school environment.

Leadership knowledge can build organizational culture. To build a productive school organizational culture, all managerial activities must be integrated between the government, principals, teachers, administrative staff, students, cleaning staff, and the community. By integrating all these components, a productive organizational culture will be created

(Budianto, 2011). Schools and foundations are not just workplaces, but ecosystems. Leaders who understand leadership can create a positive culture: appreciating innovation, supporting collaboration, building trust, and maintaining integrity. Trends in the world of education change rapidly, whether in curriculum, methods, or learning technology. Leaders who possess Leadership knowledge are able to manage change, not just follow the current but lead transformation.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the Mini MBA for School Leaders program was moderately effective in enhancing the leadership knowledge of its participants. The average N-gain score of 0.59 suggests that such focused, short-duration training can produce meaningful improvements in a relatively short period. The findings support the use of executive-style educational formats as a practical tool for the professional development of school managers. By equipping leaders with foundational knowledge in areas like situational leadership, motivation, and organizational transformation, educational institutions can better prepare them to foster productive and positive school environments. Ultimately, investing in leadership knowledge is an investment in the overall quality and resilience of the educational system itself.

We acknowledge key limitations, notably the use of a pre-experimental design without a control group, which restricts the ability to rule out external influences on the observed knowledge gains, and the study's focus on knowledge acquisition without assessing its practical application or impact on school performance. To address these gaps, future research could incorporate longitudinal designs to examine how leaders apply newly acquired knowledge over time, adopt quasi-experimental approaches with control groups to enhance causal validity, and explore program effectiveness across varied educational settings, such as public versus private institutions or different geographic contexts.

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