

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TRAINING AND MENTORING PROGRAMS IN IMPROVING THE COMPETENCIES OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN INDONESIA

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Abstract. Principal competencies cover a wide range of skills, knowledge and leadership traits needed to effectively manage a school. Principal competencies need to be developed because effective principals play a crucial role in managing schools and improving their performance. They are not only administrative leaders but also change agents who influence policies, teaching practices and school culture. Therefore, principals need to receive appropriate training and mentoring to help them fulfill their roles more effectively. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of training and mentoring programs in improving principals' competencies. The research was conducted in 12 primary schools spread across 12 provinces in Indonesia with the respondents being school principals. The training and mentoring program in this study is an activity to improve the leadership of school principals by providing training materials and guidance on the obstacles faced by participants in implementing the program. Each training is designed to be practiced in the form of assignments. Furthermore, the monitoring program is an activity to improve teacher leadership by providing classical mentoring material (60 minutes), followed by group mentoring (60 minutes). This program ran for 18 times with an intensity of once a week. Meanwhile, the coaching program was conducted for 6 months during the program implementation. The results showed that the training and mentoring program provided was very effective in developing the potential of elementary school principals and shaping and developing student character.

Keywords : Principal; Competency; Training and Mentoring Program; Elementary Schools; Student

INTRODUCTION

Effective principals play a crucial role in managing schools and improving their performance. They are not only administrative leaders but also change agents who influence policies, teaching practices and school culture. Here are some points on the importance of effective principals: (1) Visionary leader: An effective principal has a clear vision for their school. They are able to develop long-term strategic plans that will bring about positive changes, (2) Strong Managerial Skills: Good management is key in running day-to-day operations. Principals need to manage resources, budgets and school administration efficiently, (3) Instructional Leadership: Effective principals not only focus on administration, but also pay attention to the quality of teaching and learning. They support and encourage teachers' professional development and ensure that teaching is in line with set standards, (4) Fostering a Positive School Culture: Principals play a role in shaping an inclusive, collaborative and achievement-oriented school culture, (5) Relationships with Stakeholders: Building good relationships with teachers, students, parents and the community is important. Effective principals work together with all parties to support school goals (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Greenfield, 2014; Yukl, 2012; Sergiovanni, 2007).

Principal leadership is closely related to several aspects, particularly student learning outcomes. According to Leithwood, et. al (2004), the relationship between leadership in the school environment and student learning outcomes is very close and affects various aspects, including: (1) Teaching quality: Effective school leadership can influence teaching quality. Leaders who prioritize teachers' professional development, provide effective guidance, and encourage innovation in teaching methods are likely to create an environment where teachers can provide better instruction to students, (2) Learning Culture: Principals have a role in shaping the culture of learning in schools. A culture that supports exploration, collaboration and continuous improvement will have a positive impact on the way students learn and interact in the school environment, (3) Focus on Goals and Standards: Leaders who communicate a clear vision and set high standards for academic achievement provide clear direction for students and teachers. This can lead to greater student achievement, (4) Support for Policies and Resources: Effective leadership also means providing adequate support for the implementation of effective learning policies and providing the necessary resources to support student success, (5) Management of Conflict and Challenges: Principals who have the ability to manage conflict and handle challenges within the school environment can create stable conditions and support optimal learning for students. Studies have shown that strong and effective leadership at the school level has a positive correlation with improved student academic outcomes. Leadership that inspires, encourages innovation and focuses on learning has a significant impact on how students learn and grow in the school environment.

Effective principals are not born by themselves, but require a process of good training and experience. Many principals are initially excellent teachers but may not have the managerial or leadership skills necessary to manage a school effectively. The educational environment is constantly changing. Principals need to constantly update their skills to deal with new challenges such as technology in learning, the need for inclusion and innovative teaching approaches. Managing resources, including school budgets, human resources and infrastructure, is an important part of the principal's role. Training programs can help them in this aspect of management. Appropriate training and mentoring programs can provide solutions to improve principals' skills and knowledge in dealing with the challenges they face in managing their schools. It can also be a platform for the exchange of experiences and best practices between principals, building a network that supports their professional growth. (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Day et, al., 2011; Hallinger, 2003; Bush, 2011; Sergiovanni, 2007; Fullan, 2014; Elmore, 2000).

Training provides opportunities for principals to improve their leadership skills, adapt new strategies and broaden their understanding of effective leadership concepts. This is essential to respond to the complex challenges involved in managing modern schools. Transformational theory states that effective leaders can affect positive change in organizations. Training helps principals to develop the skills necessary to become leaders who are able to inspire, motivate and influence others (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Furthermore, Contingency Theory states that effective leadership considers changing situations and conditions. Training helps principals to adapt to changes in policy, technology and evolving educational needs (Yukl, 2012).

Attending training also allows principals to connect with best practices and innovations in the field of educational leadership, expand their networks, and increase awareness of the latest developments in education. Training also helps principals in

management aspects, including resource management, administration, and instructional leadership (Sergiovanni, 2007).

Principals should be able to develop the quality of teaching in schools. Servant leadership theory states that effective leaders are those who serve others first. Training helps principals to develop strategies to support teachers' professional development and improve learning quality (Greenfield, 2014).

Thus, training for principals becomes a strong foundation in improving their performance and the quality of education in their schools. The result of this study aims to see how much the effectiveness of training and mentoring programs on competency development and school principals and the character of elementary school students.

METHOD

This research is a cross-sectional study, which is an observational research method conducted at one specific point in time to collect data from a group of people or a population that represents a certain population. The research was conducted in 12 primary schools spread across 12 provinces in Indonesia with the respondents being school principals..

The training program was given to principals for 3 months, then monitoring was conducted for 6 months. Principals were given assistance in implementing the results of the training provided. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the program on the development of competence in the school was measured.

Principal competency was measured based on 6 variables adopted from the research of Defit, et al. (2022), namely: (a) Coach , able to guide students according to their potential. Also able to guide other teachers; (b) Educator , has a good teacher self-concept, and has the ability to design, implement and evaluate learning; (c) Reinforcer , able to motivate oneself, students and other teachers to achieve the best achievements in every activity; (d) Millennials are able to utilize technological developments for the effectiveness of learning and education; (e) Analyzer , able to analyze problems, then formulate solutions; (f) Trainer , able to communicate effectively, master good public speaking skills, and able to share knowledge and experience with other teachers.

The level of category and influence on each variable is measured using scoring techniques. The scoring system for all variables is made consistent, namely the higher the score, the higher the category. After that, they are added up and categorized using normative scoring techniques.

$$\text{Class Interval (IK)} = \frac{\text{Maximum Score (Sma)} - \text{Minimum Score (Smi)}}{\text{Number of categories}}$$

Table 1. Assessment Categories

Percentage of achievement	Assessment Category
$0 \leq x \leq 25$	Ineffective
$25 < x \leq 50$	Less effective
$50 < x \leq 75$	Effective
$75 < x \leq 100$	Very effective

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Training Program

Andrew E. Sikula quoted by Sedarmayanti and Rahadian (2018) states, training is a short-term educational process that uses systematic and organized procedures where non-managerial employees learn knowledge. Improving the quality of learning can be done by self-development through training. Training is very important for the high and low

competence of teachers. The training attended by teachers will add insight, theory and knowledge in the learning activities applied.

The training program in this study is an activity to improve the leadership of school principals by providing simple and practical training materials. Each training is designed to be practiced in the form of assignments. Furthermore, the monitoring program is an activity to improve teacher leadership by providing classical mentoring material (60 minutes), followed by group mentoring (60 minutes). This program ran for 18 times with an intensity of once a week.

The training and mentoring program began with a pretest and posttest to assess teachers' knowledge pre and post training or monitoring. The training program was conducted 11 times within 2 months.

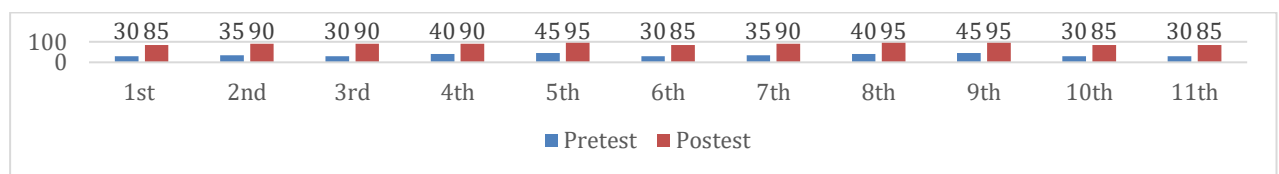


Figure 1. Training Program Pretest and Posttest Scores (%)

The measurement results showed that overall there was an increase in posttest scores for each training provided. The average score shows that there was an increase in teacher knowledge after the training of 55%. This means that teachers' knowledge in educating the 'nowadays' generation increased very well after the training.

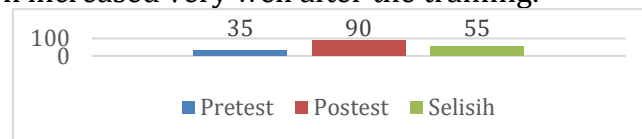


Figure 2. Post-Program Teacher Knowledge Improvement (%)

Mentoring Program

The mentoring program was carried out 7 times within 2 months. The measurement results show that overall there was an increase in posttest scores for each mentoring provided.

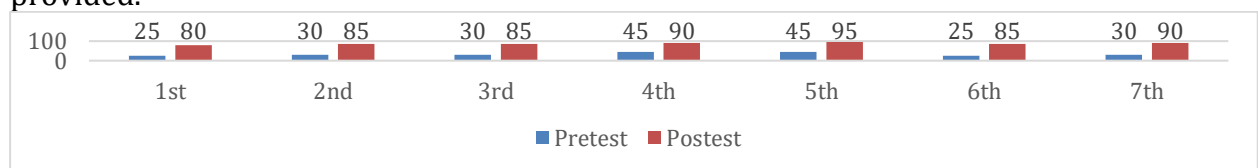


Figure 3. Mentoring Program Pretest and Posttest Scores (%)

Meanwhile, the average score shows that there was a 55% increase in teachers' knowledge after the training. This means that teachers' skills in educating the 'nowadays' generation improved greatly after receiving the mentoring program.

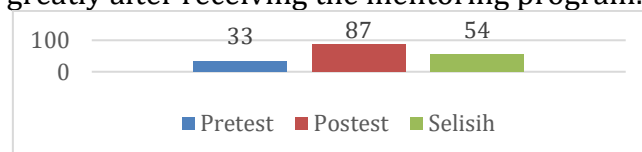


Figure 4. Post-Program Teacher Skills Improvement (%)

Coaching Program

The coaching program is an activity to improve the leadership of school principals by providing guidance on the obstacles faced by participants in implementing the program.

Teachers are given guidance by coaches who come from education practitioners. These coaches have experience in education. Coaching is conducted for 6 months during program implementation. In this program, teachers are also guided and monitored to apply the knowledge and experience gained during training and mentoring.

Assignment and Implementation

Assignment and implementation is a follow-up to each material (training and mentoring) so that it can be applied and manifest into the competence and character of civilization teachers. Program participants are given assignments after attending training and mentoring. One form of assignment given is to create and implement character development programs for students, such as: habituation of good manners, mutual cooperation, and social activities. The assessment results show that in general the average score of the participants' assignments is 90 points.

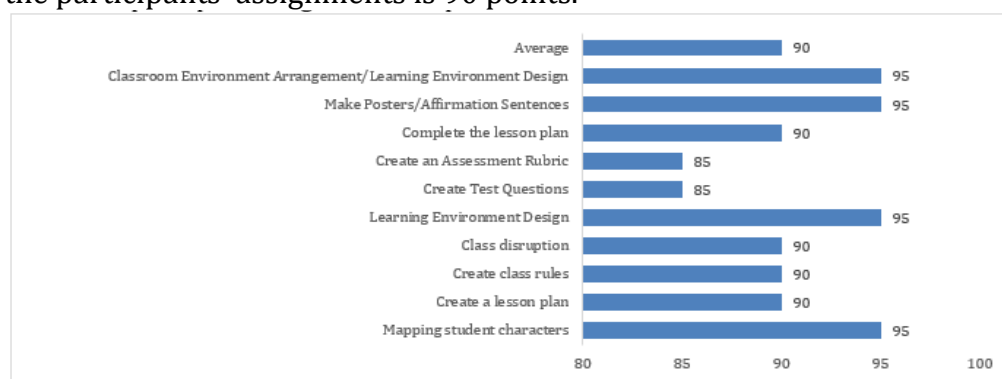


Figure 5. Assignment Assessment

Effectiveness of Training and Mentoring Programs on Principal Competency Development

According to Rosni (2021), teacher competence includes aspects of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that are relevant to the duties and roles of teachers in the context of education. Teacher competencies include mastery of teaching materials, ability to plan and implement learning, ability to manage classes, ability to communicate with students and parents, and ability to develop themselves professionally (Suryabrata, 2018).

Appropriate and relevant training plays an important role in preparing principals to deal with the complex demands of education. This enables principals to become more effective and influential leaders in shaping a positive learning environment in schools (Hallinger & Heck, 2010).

Principal competency in this study was measured based on 6 variables, namely: (1) Principal as Coach, (2) Principal as Educator, (3) Principal as Reinforcer, (4) Principal as Millennial, (5) Principal as Analyzer, (6) Principal as Trainer.

The results showed that the training and mentoring program provided was very effective in developing the potential of elementary school principals with a score of 86.5%. This is in line with the results of research by Bush and Glover (2014) which showed that training has a significant impact on the development of school principals' competencies. Training provides opportunities for principals to improve the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed for effective leadership in the school environment. Training provides insight into various effective leadership approaches that can be applied in the school environment. Principals can gain more in-depth knowledge of education management, administration and policy.

Table 2. Effectiveness of the Program on Competency Development of School Principals

No	Competence	Score (%)	Category
1	The Principal as Coach	83	Very effective
2	The Principal as an Educator	88	Very effective
3	The Principal as Reinforcer	87	Very effective
4	The Principal as a Millennial	84	Very effective
5	The Principal as Analyzer	88	Very effective
6	The Principal as Trainer	89	Very effective
Average		86.5	Very effective

CONCLUSION

Principal competencies in this study were measured based on 6 variables, namely: (1) principal as Coach, (2) principal as Educator, (3) principal as Reinforcer, (4) principal as Millennial, (5) principal as Analyzer, (6) principal as Trainer. The results showed that the training and mentoring program provided was very effective in developing the potential of elementary school principals with a score of 86.5%.

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