

## Teacher's Perception of Training Middle Managers in Leadership and Management Skills: A Survey at Al-Hidayah Foundation

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### ABSTRACT

Middle manager training is a critical component of any school's success, as middle managers play a critical role in the effectiveness and development of the school, as well as critical to the school's success. Numerous recent studies, however, indicate that middle managers lack the necessary support and training to perform their jobs effectively. Additionally, it identified the fact that middle management positions are increasing in both number and density, yet middle managers are being chosen for positions without the necessary support or training. Thus, the teacher's perceptions are needed to highlight more about the importance of training middle managers in leadership and management skills. This study is a survey study which is aimed to get an empirical data about teachers' perceptions of training middle managers in leadership and management skills at *Al-Hidayah* foundation. The writer used modified questionnaire to gather the data. All the participants are considered as middle managers at *Al-Hidayah* Foundation including principal, vice principle and other Heads of Department. The result shows that training middle managers in leadership and management skills can give positive impact to build professionalism as teacher and manager.

**Keywords:** Teacher's Perception, Training Middle Managers, Leadership and Management Skills

### INTRODUCTION

Middle managers refer to individual who has formal role of responsibility and who takes part forming the middle leadership level in school development. The position of middle managers in improving the school status is well recognized in many other countries, including Indonesia. It is done with the chronic demand for raising standards and achievement of the school. In addition, middle managers have an essential part in school development and effectiveness as well as vital to the success of the school. Nonetheless,

schools are critical institutions in any educational sector, necessitating qualified leaders with a positive attitude and the ability to foster a harmonious school environment that fosters collaboration and communication among staff members, education stakeholders, and learners. Leadership and management also have an effect on the way teachers teach and manage the school system in this case. Thus, training middle managers comes up as an essential part to be done in a school area to build up teachers' professionalism and commitment in

teaching and managing their role at school.

In contrast, numerous recent researches indicate that middle managers are not having enough relevant support and training they need to fulfil their roles. While other researchers argued that there has been some improvement on the lack of adequate and effective training for middle managers before they take up the roles, including those who aspire the middle manager position. Furthermore, it identified the fact that the positions in middle management are growing in number as well as its' density, yet middle managers are being chosen to the positions without the relevant support or training.

According to Mampane (2017), The leadership and management training program was beneficial in identifying what should be considered when leading and managing teachers and learning tasks. Middle managers' abilities would aid them in developing a highly qualified and loyal teaching workforce in the field of education. It is in line with Razvani's (2017) statement that leadership is one of middle manager's prominent role including strategic and management.

Some researchers have been focused on examining the importance of management training needs and other leadership development training of middle managers. The first previous research was conducted by Wedlick (2012) which concerned with the effect of leadership development training on middle managers in law administration. The result of this study discovered that leadership development is sophisticated, not through formal training, but from qualities, skills, and informal development. Middle

managers need such training to develop their characteristics and skills to achieve their full potential. Another previous study conducted by Gleeson and Knights (2008) focused on analyzing the perceptions of middle managers leadership in higher education in England. They examined a group of middle managers who are hesitant to become leaders.

Accordance to the previous research, this present study intended to bridge the gap in finding out the teachers' perception of training middle managers in leadership and management skill. Given that middle managers assume responsibility for the school at the middle level, developing teachers' leadership and management skills may be an effective strategy for increasing teachers' commitment to effective teaching and learning in the classroom.

## **METHOD**

A survey design was applied in this present study. A survey design can be a mean of getting information and feedback to be used in planning and improving a program (Hart, Jeniffer, Elver, Schaeffer, & Stevenson, 2010 in Birul 2016). The purpose of survey design is to provide a portrait of how things are at specific time (Kelley, Clark, Brown, & Sitzia, 2003, p. 261 in Birul, 2016, p. 25). Survey provides a quantitative or numeric description of movements, attitudes, or opinions of a population by reviewing a sample of that population (Creswell, 2014, p. 41). The data in survey research can be widespread if the sample signifies the whole population (Riduwan, 2005, p. 49 in Birul, 2016). The purpose of this study is to provide

authentic useful information to evaluate a program (Creswell, 2012, p. 376 in Birul, 2016).

The data needed for this study is quantitative data. The data gathered from the questionnaire. The questionnaire was used to gather data from a small number of teachers who considered as middle managers and generalized the result. Questionnaire was distributed to the respondents of the study. The respondents were given the questionnaires and they have to give their answers based on the choices given. The given questionnaires contained details information and opinion which related to perception on training middle managers in leadership and management skills at Al-Hidayah foundation. The collected data were analyzed statistically to describe the result.

**Data and Data Source**

The data of this study are teachers' answers form questionnaire. The data sources are teachers at Al-Hidayah foundation (SMP, SMA and SMK Diponegoro 1 Jakarta) who considered as middle managers including principals, vice principals and other heads of department. There are 14 teachers which have been chosen from each unit of the foundation. This study was conducted from November up to December 2020 at Al-Hidayah foundation.

**Questionnaire**

Some items for the questionnaire were adopted and modified from previous study conducted by Mampane (2017) and some others were built based on the theories from experts at the literature review. Each number of questionnaires were

written in Bahasa Indonesia to avoid any misinterpretation. The questionnaire was distributed to the 14 respondents of this study. The questionnaire was arranged based on indicator and aspects. Below the description of each statement in the questionnaire.

Table 1. Questionnaire Form

Part(s)	Content
Part 1: General questions	Background Information
Part 2: About Training Middle Managers	Professional Development Leadership and Management The role of Middle Managers Training needs

**Data Collection Procedure**

This research requires quantitative data. The quantitative data were gained by distributing questionnaire to the sample of the study. The questionnaires were distributed directly to 14 teachers via Google form. In order to collect the data, the researcher did these following steps. Here are the data collection procedures for questionnaire:

1. Adopting and modifying questionnaires from the previous study conducted by Mampane. (2017)
2. Allocating the questionnaire to the participants
3. Managing the fulfilled questionnaire

**Data Analysis Procedure**

To answer the questions of what students' perception of training middle managers in leadership and management at Al-Hidayah foundation, the writer used the data collected from questionnaires. Then, the writer analyzed those data statistically by using Google form

and Microsoft Excel 2013. The steps in analyzing the data were described below:

The questionnaire was analyzed through the following stages:

1. Listing the answers in each part with Microsoft Excel 2013
2. Calculating total answer from entire respondents in each part by Google form
3. Making the table percentage of the answer
4. Elaborating the answer descriptively

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this part, the results of the study are discussed. The part is divided into two main points. The first point presents the data description and the second section is findings and results from questionnaire to answer the research questions about teachers' perceptions of training middle managers in leadership and management at *Al-Hidayah* foundation.

### *Data Description*

The data were gained through an instrument which is questionnaire. The data sources of the questionnaire were 14 teachers at Al-Hidayah foundation (SMP, SMA and SMK Diponegoro 1 Jakarta) who were chosen because of their roles which considered as middle managers. Half of the 14 teachers claimed that they had known and involved to join leadership or management training. In order to avoid confusion and misconception, the questionnaire was written in Bahasa Indonesia. It contains of 15 questions including the background information. There are 8 statements using multiple

choice answers. And, the rest of the questions used linier scale answer based on the respondents' own experience while being middle managers. The questionnaire was adopted and modified from the previous study conducted by Mampane (2017) which is based on some variables or indicators such as: professional development, leadership and management, the role of middle managers and training needs.

The middle manager questionnaires were divided into two sections: background information (Section A) and training middle managers (Section B), which covered professional development, the role of middle managers, leadership and management, as well as training needs. The writer presented the questionnaire's findings in a question-by-question format. Following that, a discussion of the findings ensued.

All teachers considered to be middle managers in this study came from three distinct school units within the same foundation. There have been 14 responses thus far. Only middle managers with subject-matter responsibilities were chosen (principle, vice principle, heads of department and heads of programs).

Table 2. Percentage of the Respondents' Position

Position in school in relation to responsibilities/tasks		
Position in school	Number of Respondents	Percent
Principal	3	21,4%
Vice Principal	5	35,7%
Heads of Program	3	21,4%
Heads of Department	2	14,4%
Other	1	7,1%

The majority of middle managers (35.7%) took positions as vice principals at *Al-Hidayah* foundation. Just over 20% of respondents were program directors, and more than 7% held other middle management positions (teacher in charge).

The respondents' teaching experience as well as their experience as middle managers was significant data because it assisted in developing a profile of people in middle management positions. The writer was curious as to how much experience as a middle manager could reflect their roles and overall level of satisfaction in middle management positions. In that case, the questions about teaching experience and middle management experience revealed the following information.

Table 3. Percentage of the Respondents as Middle Manager

Years as a teacher		Years as a middle manager	
Number of years	Percentage	Number of years	Percentage
Less than 5 years	14,3%	Less than 5 years	57,1%
5-10 years	35.7%	5-10 years	14,3%
More than 10 years	50%	More than 10 years	28,6%
TOTAL	100	TOTAL	100

The majority of middle managers surveyed (50%) had at least ten years of teaching experience. Only slightly more than 14% of middle managers had less than five years of teaching experience. In general, these middle managers resembled a group of

senior teachers and educators with extensive teaching experience. According to the previous table, the percentage of middle managers with less than five years of experience and those with more than ten years of experience were equal (more than 25%). Slightly more than 14% of respondents reported having between five and ten years of middle management experience. It appears as though middle managers have an equally even distribution of experience. The following information was gathered in response to the question about middle managers' experience with leadership or management training:

Table 4. Middle Managers' Experience in Training

Experience in joining Leadership Training		Experience in joining Management Training	
YES	NO	YES	NO
78,6%	21,4%	85,7%	14,3%

As shown from the table above that most of the middle managers have ever been joining leadership and management training. From this result, the writer will further analyze and identify their perceptions of training middle managers in leadership and management, including their perceptions on the impact of developing leadership and management skills for their roles as middle managers in school. As written in the questionnaire that they should mention what kind of training they attended or joined. The following diagram will show that percentage.



72.7% respondents have been joining leadership and management training in a form of workshop. And, there are over 27 percent of middle managers joined the conference to get the training of leadership and management. As shown from the chart, the next following results and discussion is related to their perception on how important leadership and management skills for their development of middle managers role in school environment.

### ***Finding and Discussion***

The training programs of leadership and management can enhance teachers' performance in schools through effective leadership and management practice. According to Harris and Jones (2017), leadership from the middle can be a thoughtful strategy that rises the capacity and internal consistency of the middle since it becomes a more effective partner in growing the school communities to pursuit the greater system performance. In line with those statements, training middle managers in leadership and management is one of the crucial things to be done to build up teachers' commitment and their

professionalism. However, some of the teachers have ever been joining the training of leadership and management, they agreed that the effectiveness of teaching and learning activity can be formed by good management and leadership skill.

To follow up those arguments, the researcher analyses and elaborates the data from questionnaires into a comprehensive result that reflects the teachers' perception of training middle managers in leadership and management skill at *Al-Hidayah* foundation. The following diagrams are the results of teachers' answer on how their perceptions of training middle managers in leadership and management skills. Scale 1 to 5 is similar with very agree to very disagree.

1. The effectiveness of teaching and learning activity can be achieved by good leadership and management skills.

As demonstrated by the response to this question, more than 80% of respondents agree that effective teaching and learning can be achieved through strong leadership and management skills. While only 7% disagree with the preceding statement. They generally concur that both leadership and management are critical, as schools require the manager's objective perspective as well as the vision and commitment that thoughtful leadership provides. Additionally, Mampane (2017) asserts that in order to effectively manage teaching and learning strategies, teachers must be on track with institutional concerns and agreed-upon educational organization operations. Additionally, Bambi (2012) states that management activities should

utilize institutional resources efficiently and effectively in order to accomplish institutional goals. As a result, educational objectives must be mutually agreed upon by the school and its community.

2. Middle managers can build up their professionalism by having good leadership and management skills.

The result of the questionnaire showed, there are more than 78 percent the respondents agree and very agree with middle managers that can build up their professionalism by having good leadership and management skills. It is in line with what Mampone (2010) said that Educating middle managers in leadership and management skills has a significant impact on their lifelong learning, personal and professional development. Additionally, middle managers with strong leadership and management skills can build their confidence and advance their performance during teacher leadership and their teaching professional careers.

3. Middle managers training which involved problem solving and hands-on activities about leadership and management can overcome school's problems.

As shown from the result of the questionnaire that the respondents who have ever been joining a leadership and management training nor who have never been joining the training are very agree that middle managers training which involved problem solving and hands out or module activities about leadership and management can overcome school's problems, this indicate that training middle managers should be part of lifelong learning to solve

problems of non-preparation and lack of training in management and leadership.

4. Middle managers should have leadership and management skills to achieve school's objective.

The result shows about how middle managers very agree on having leadership and management skills to achieve school's objectives. There are more than 80 percent from the respondents who are very agree / agree with this point. While there are only 7 percent of the respondents who is disagree with this point. In line with Mampone's (2017) statement that throughout training in leadership and management skills, teachers can focus on achieving school's objectives.

5. Leadership and management training should be part of lifelong learning for the success of the school in leading and managing the organization.

As shown from the questionnaire result that training middle managers in leadership and management could part of lifelong learning in persuing the school excellence. There are over 80 percent of the respondents agree and very disagree with this point and only 7 percent who is disagree. This question indicates that the success of a school can be achieved by supporting lifelong learning through middle management training in leadership and management skills.

6. The improvement of students' achievement and motivation as well as teachers' commitment in teaching depends on Middle Managers.

The final questionnaire result shows that over 50 percent of the respondents agree and very agree that the improvement of students'

achievement and motivation as well as teachers' commitment in teaching depends on middle managers. While there is only one respondent who disagree with this point. It is consistent with the leadership quality that has a significant impact on school and learner achievement in a variety of parts of the world, including Indonesia. Effective leaders and managers are necessary for schools to provide the best possible education for their students.

According to Crane & De Nobile, (2014) in Mampane (2017) Middle managers should have objectives and should motivate others to act by initiating change to accomplish existing and new goals. As a result, leadership and management training should have an effect on how others act in order to achieve the central components of the leadership phenomenon. Additionally, middle managers acquire competency, support, and guidance in leadership and management, which helps them improve their teaching support skills. In short, middle managers with their leadership and management skills can improve students' achievement, motivation and their own commitment.

7. The programs of leadership and management training can enrich performance in schools through effective leadership and management.

As written in the result of questionnaire, there are over 80 percent who are agree and very agree with this point about training program of leadership and management which can expand teachers' performance in schools through effective leadership and management. While none of them

who is neutral and very disagree, but there is only 7 percent who is disagree with this statement. The result is in line with McCauley & Brutus's (2011) argument that the importance of middle managers training in leadership and management has directed to improve attention to not only effectively prepare the individual leaders but also on the context in which they work to improve learner performance.

The next question is related to the level of satisfaction in the middle manager's role showed in the following information:

Table 5. Level of Satisfaction as Middle Managers

Level of Satisfaction as Middle Managers	Percentage
Very satisfied	28,6
Satisfied	28,6
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	42,9
Dissatisfied	0
Very dissatisfied	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

According to the above table, more than 57% of respondents were extremely satisfied/satisfied with their role as a middle manager. On the other hand, none of the respondents reported being dissatisfied/extremely dissatisfied with their role. While over 42% of respondents indicated that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their current role.

The last question of the questionnaire is about the most preference topic to be discussed in the training of middle managers in leadership and management skills. The following chart will show the percentage.



As shown from the chart above, there are 50 percent from the respondents chose professional leadership to be a part of the topic discussion in middle managers training, this is in line with the importance of having leadership skills for their own professions to maintain and build up the respondents' professionalism as middle managers and teachers, thus professional leadership appear as the most chosen topic in this questionnaire.

In conclusion, training middle managers in leadership and management skills can give them positive impact to build their professionalism as teacher and manager as shown from all results of the questionnaire. Additionally, it demonstrates that leadership and management play critical roles in determining the level of commitment among teachers in a school. This study suggests that *Al-Hidayah* foundation can provide middle managers to be trained to provide guidance, information and proficiency through leadership and management.

In addition, teacher performance in school could be more improved and enhanced by having the adequate leadership and management skills. Training teachers in leadership and management skills may be an effective method of increasing their commitment to effective teaching and learning in the classroom. And, middle managers training program will also help the schools to produce the qualified teachers in practicing the suitable leadership style to ensure their commitment and responsibility at work.

## CONCLUSION

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