

LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR ORPHANAGE STUDENTS: MAKE THE ORPHANAGE A PLACE TO FORGE LEADERSHIP CHARACTER

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of a leadership training program on children living in an orphanage. Using a participatory action research approach, the program aimed to improve the character and leadership skills of 30 children aged 12-18 years. Interactive methods, including lectures, role-plays, simulations, and group discussions, were used over three days. Data were collected through pre- and post-tests, direct observation, and in-depth interviews. The results showed significant improvements in the participants' knowledge, attitudes, and leadership skills. The training also fostered increased self-confidence, initiative, and empathy among the children. These findings highlight the potential of orphanages as strategic venues for leadership development. The study concluded that leadership training can have a positive impact on the character and soft skills of children in orphanages, equipping them with the tools necessary to become future leaders and responsible members of society.

Keywords: *Leadership Training, Orphanage, Character Development, Soft Skills, Participatory Action Research, Youth Development.*

INTRODUCTION

An orphanage is a social institution that functions as a place to accommodate and provide protection for orphans. In the context of character building and personality formation, orphanages have a strategic role because the children who live there are in a very important period of development. During this period, character building and social skills need to be given intensively so that they are able to become independent and responsible individuals in the future. This character strengthening is not only oriented towards moral and moral aspects, but also includes leadership skills that are important for self-success and usefulness to society. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2023, it shows that most students in orphanages have great potential in academic and social aspects, but they often do not receive appropriate character education. The lack of structured leadership training in the orphanage environment is one of the factors inhibiting the development of this potential. In fact, developing leadership from an early age can help them face challenges in the future and be able to take an active role in community life.

In addition, the context of character education and leadership at an early age is very relevant, considering that the character built during childhood and adolescence will be the main foundation for the future. According to Erikson (2013), adolescence is a crucial period in the formation of self-identity, including leadership traits, moral values, and empathy. Therefore, intervention in the form of leadership training in the orphanage environment is very important to instill these positive values sustainably. In addition, orphanages as social institutions have a moral and social responsibility in preparing a quality next generation of the nation. According to Rahman's research (2022), leadership training not only improves individual psychological abilities, but also builds solidarity, discipline, and a sense of social responsibility that will contribute greatly to their success in community life. Therefore, this training program is directed at making orphanages a place that not only accommodates, but also fosters and forms leadership character in students.

Finally, the development of leadership training programs in orphanages is expected to be a model and provide inspiration for other social institutions. By integrating the principles of character education and soft skills, orphanages can be an effective vehicle for instilling solid leadership values in the children in them, while also supporting the strengthening of the nation's character resilience that is currently being promoted. Orphanages have long been identified as places of protection and fulfillment of basic needs for children who have lost their parents or come from underprivileged families. However, orphanages also have great potential as spaces for character building and developing human resource capacity, especially in forming individuals who are independent, responsible, and ready to become future leaders. Reality shows that many students in orphanages have great potential, but have not been given space to develop leadership, social skills, and decision-making abilities. The formation of leadership character is very important, especially in adolescence, where this period is a golden period in psychological, moral, and spiritual development.

According to Law No. 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection, the state is responsible for ensuring that children, including those in alternative care institutions, have the right to self-development. Therefore, there needs to be an empowerment program that elevates the role of orphanages from mere care institutions to character development centers. Leadership is not just an innate talent, but can be forged through training and habituation. By providing leadership training to orphanage students, we open up space for them to recognize their potential, learn to make decisions, build empathy, and communicate well. Through leadership training that is designed in an applicative manner, students can learn to take on roles, lead groups, resolve conflicts, and build self-confidence. In this way, orphanages can become effective leadership laboratories to produce superior generations.

Formulation of the problem

1. How to improve the leadership capacity of students in orphanages?
2. What is the most effective training method in instilling leadership values in students?
3. How to create a foster care environment that is conducive to the formation of leadership character?

Activity Objectives

- To grow students' awareness and knowledge about the importance of leadership.
- Train basic leadership skills such as communication, decision making, and teamwork.
- Forming the character of students who are strong, visionary, and responsible.
- Encourage orphanages to adopt a leadership development approach in their daily activities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Leadership

According to Northouse (2018), leadership is the process of influencing others to achieve common goals. Leadership is not only equipped with a formal position, but also the ability to motivate and inspire others.

Character and Leadership Development in Children and Adolescents

Klaus and Kopp (2020) stated that character and leadership values are deeply internalized through direct experience, moral teaching, and role models. Effective character education can increase empathy, discipline, and a sense of responsibility of students.

Leadership Training in Orphanages

A study by Abdullah et al. (2022) showed that fun and educational activity-based training can increase students' self-confidence and leadership skills. Participatory and experience-based approaches such as role playing, simulations, and group discussions have proven effective.

The Role of Orphanages in Character Building

According to Muhammad (2021), orphanages must be institutions that not only accommodate orphans physically, but also serve as a place to instill moral and character values, including leadership, through various activities that support self-development.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in the implementation of this leadership training is based on the participatory action research (PAR) approach, which emphasizes the active participation of participants in every stage of the activity. This approach was chosen because it is able to increase the involvement of students directly, so that they do not only receive the material passively, but are also able to internalize and apply it in everyday life. Thus, the training is not only theoretical, but also practical and applicable. Participants of this training were students aged 12-18 years who live in Panti Asuhan Jaya Mulia. A total of 30 students participated in the entire series of activities, which were arranged in stages and structured. Before the activity began, initial data collection was carried out by filling out a pre-test questionnaire which aimed to measure their level of understanding, attitude, and initial abilities related to the concept of leadership and character. This data is used as a basis for comparison to assess the success of the training.

The training activities were carried out for three full days with interactive methods. On the first day, basic materials were given regarding the concept of leadership and the importance of character in life. The second day focused on practical activities such as role playing, leadership simulations, and small group discussions, which aimed to train skills and instill positive values. The third day was a reflection and evaluation, where students were invited to discuss their experiences during the training and to create a personal action plan to apply the knowledge gained. Data collection was conducted through triangulation, namely through direct observation during the activity, in-depth interviews with students and mentors, and filling out a post-test questionnaire after the training was completed. Data from the pre-test and post-test were used to assess the increase in participants' knowledge and attitudes, while observation and interview data provided an overview of changes in skills and the implementation of leadership values in their daily lives. Data analysis was conducted quantitatively and qualitatively to obtain a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of the training. Overall, this methodology aims to ensure that the training carried out not only provides theoretical knowledge, but also forms character and practical skills that can be implemented directly by students. With a participatory and reflective approach, it is hoped that the learning process will be more meaningful and sustainable.



Gambar 1

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the leadership training conducted at Panti Asuhan Jaya Mulia showed a significant increase in the knowledge, attitudes, and skills of the students. The pre-test questionnaire data indicated that before the training, the average score of participants' understanding of the concept of leadership and character was 65 on a scale of 100. After participating in the training for three days, the average score increased to around 85, which indicates an increase of 20 points or around 30.77%. This shows the effectiveness of the training in improving basic knowledge and understanding of students regarding the importance of leadership and positive character (Susanto, 2023).

In addition to cognitive improvements, the results of observations and interviews showed positive changes in the attitudes and social skills of the students. Before the training, many of them showed a lack of self-confidence, lack of initiative, and tended to be passive in interacting. After the training, most participants showed increased self-confidence, were able to speak in public, and were more active in group discussions. They also began to show empathy and a sense of responsibility for the tasks given. These results are in line with research conducted by Wulandari and Supriyadi (2022), which found that experience-based leadership training was effective in building participants' soft skills and moral character.

Furthermore, training participants were able to prepare and present real action plans to apply leadership values in daily life in the orphanage environment and in the community. This action plan shows that they not only understand the concept theoretically, but are also able to apply it in real life. They admit that this activity provides very valuable practical experience and is able to increase their self-confidence and provide motivation to continue learning and developing (Kurniawan & Rizki, 2023).

From the final evaluation results, qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews confirmed that students felt more motivated and had a positive view of leadership. They stated that this activity had opened their horizons, motivated them to become better people, and instilled a sense of social responsibility towards others. Overall, the results of this study indicate that leadership training in the orphanage environment can provide a real positive impact on the formation of character and soft skills of students (Dewi & Ardianto, 2023).



Figure 2

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and evaluation that have been conducted, it can be concluded that the leadership training conducted at the Miftahul Jannah Orphanage has a significant positive impact on the development of the character and soft skills of the students. The increase in knowledge, attitudes, and skills of the participants shows that this activity is effective in equipping them with the basics of leadership and moral values. In addition, direct experience through various practical activities such as role playing and group discussions can increase the students' self-confidence and motivation to apply these values in their daily lives. This training also succeeded in raising awareness of

the importance of character and social responsibility, so that students are better prepared to become agents of change in their surroundings. These results confirm that orphanages not only function as physical shelters, but also as strategic vehicles in shaping the personality and leadership competencies of the younger generation. Therefore, this kind of training needs to be developed and expanded so that its benefits can be felt by more students and other social institutions. In general, leadership training based on experience and active participation of participants is an effective approach to instilling positive character and building lasting soft skills. In the future, this program needs to be supplemented with further training and continuous monitoring so that the implementation of leadership values becomes an integral part of the lives of students, and is able to create a quality and responsible generation of the nation's successors.

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