



Developing Leadership Skills in Administrative Staff Through Professional Development Program at School Pelita Harapan

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: 2022-05-15 Revised: 2022-06-22 Published: 2022-07-11 Keywords: <i>Professional Development; Training; Administrative Staff; Christian School; Communication.</i>	<p>A school cannot function with only teachers, but it also needs administrative staff to support its operational activities and keep it sustainable. However, over the years, it seemed that Sekolah Pelita Harapan (SPH) had not given equal care to the administrative staff's growth compared to teachers. This was seen in the lack of preparation for the administrative staff's professional development (PD). Based on school leaders, administrative staff still needed to grow in their leadership skills to be able to step up and do their part. Thus, this research aimed to determine the leadership skills area for the administrative staff to grow, the type of PD program that could help grow those skills, and to evaluate if PD is effective to develop those skills. The research was done through an evaluation study, especially the CSE-UCLA method. From this research, it is to be concluded that the skills include communication, decision making, taking initiative, teamwork, and self-management. A PD program that involves hands-on activities as being the best practice and could help grow leadership skills in administrative staff. However, a better follow-up program should be developed to really make this effective.</p>
Artikel Info	Abstrak
Sejarah Artikel Diterima: 2022-05-15 Direvisi: 2022-06-22 Dipublikasi: 2022-07-11 Kata kunci: <i>Pengembangan Professional; Pelatihan; Karyawan Administrasi; Sekolah Kristen; Komunikasi.</i>	<p>Sebuah sekolah tidak dapat berfungsi hanya dengan guru, tapi juga memerlukan karyawan administrasi untuk mendukung kegiatan operasionalnya dan menjaga kelanjutannya. Selama ini, Sekolah Pelita Harapan (SPH) dipandang belum memberikan perhatian yang setara untuk pertumbuhan karyawan administrasi dibandingkan untuk guru. Hal ini terlihat dalam persiapan program professional development (PD) karyawan administrasi yang belum memadai. Menurut para pemimpin sekolah, karyawan administrasi masih perlu bertumbuh dalam keterampilannya terutama keterampilan kepemimpinan agar dapat menjalankan perannya dengan baik. Maka, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menentukan area keterampilan kepemimpinan yang perlu dikembangkan karyawan administrasi, tipe program PD yang dapat mendukung pertumbuhan keterampilan tersebut, dan mengevaluasi apakah PD efektif membantu menumbuhkan keterampilan tersebut. Penelitian ini dilakukan menggunakan metode studi evaluasi, khususnya CSE-UCLA. Dari penelitian ini, dapat disimpulkan bahwa keterampilan yang dibutuhkan termasuk komunikasi, pelayanan prima, pembuatan keputusan, pengambilan inisiatif, kerjasama tim, manajemen pribadi, dan berbagai keahlian teknis lainnya berdasarkan area kerja. Dengan program PD yang melibatkan kegiatan praktik langsung sebagai bentuk yang baik dan membantu pengembangan keterampilan kepemimpinan pada karyawan administratif. Namun, program tindak lanjut yang lebih baik harus dikembangkan agar PD dapat semakin efektif.</p>

I. INTRODUCTION

Whenever the topic of school comes up, what usually comes to mind are the teachers and students. However, only a few would directly think of the administrative staff. Moreover, not a lot would consider working as a staff in a school. This matter is often encountered in the school community. Often times, the main focus of leaders (Head of School, Principals and administrative managers) usually are teachers and students, not the administrative staff. However, when the definition of administrative

staff is understood, it could be seen how important administrative staff are. The administration originally comes from Latin word *administrare* which basically means to assist and help (Kostecki, 2021). It is also stated that *administrare* itself comes from the word *ad* which means on and *ministrare* which means to serve or attend (Putra, 2019). Hence, it could be concluded that administration actually means to serve or to assist, in other words, to do ministry, while staff means an employee or someone employed by an organization or company (Cambridge

Dictionary, 2022a). Therefore, it can be concluded that administrative staff are employees of an organization or company that serves or does ministry. In a school, administration staff usually refers to the employees who support the school work on the administration side such as human resources, marketing, finance, general affair, purchasing, maintenance, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). These departments can also be referred to as the business side of a school. Their main purpose is to make sure that all the essential business activities are done well and efficiently to achieve the goal (Carysforth & Neilo, 2006).

1. Skills Needed by Administrative Staff

Understanding the definition and role of administrative staff, the next question is what would be the standard needed in an administrative staff? According to Julia (2007), there are standards needed in the administration staff of a Christian school. The first is spiritual standard where employees need to show their spiritual fruit since everyone has the chance to influence how the school testifies to the community. Therefore, administrative staff should be born again in Christ, able to testify Christ's salvation and show the spiritual fruit. Other than that, administration staff should also have a servant's heart that is willing to serve and do their best for the benefit of the school and the glory of Christ. A good understanding of the Bible, strong faith, and the heart to serve, should also help administration staff to be able to work together as a team and have the right attitude. The second is the academic standard, and administrative staff a required to have adequate knowledge needed to fulfil their job. This would depend on the department where they work or their individual job description, whether it be finance knowledge, marketing knowledge, design skills, administrative skills, public speaking, leadership, and other various skills and knowledge. In addition, administrative staff should also be able to balance and mobilize their attitude, skills, ill, knowledge, and biblical worldview to achieve various demands. McMillan, 2007) Hence it can be agreed that administrative staff are important to a school and they have the skills needed in order to perform their role well.

With the world that constantly changes, administrative staff too should continue to grow and learn in order to keep up and do their work well. One of the things that are

often overlooked is the growth of administrative staff in their technical and leadership skills that would help them be more effective stewards in the school. Based on the researcher's observation after three years of working at two SPH campuses, the administrative staff are mostly lacking ownership and initiative in the work they do, they prefer to stay quiet unless asked, and do not want to take a risk by contributing to decision making and letting the leaders make the decisions. One of the support a school can give to its administrative staff's growth is through professional development (PD) program. Sadly, PD for administrative staff in schools is often overlooked. This is seen by the huge difference in research and resources available for both junior and senior school teachers compared to staff PD. Very little research was found that talks about PD for administrative staff in a school, especially in the Christian school context. The closest is either teacher or academic leader PD in a Christian school or training for staff outside the school context. Other than that, based on the researcher's observation, PD for administrative staff at SPH is not well planned and does not have a good follow-up program. It also does not equip holistically but rather just focused on the spiritual side. Leadership skills are not being discussed. In reality, leadership skills are very important for administrative staff in the school. The better the leadership skills of each of the administrative staff, the more likely they can problem solve, take initiative, be more innovative, and be able to give more positive contributions to the school.

2. Leadership Skills

Leadership itself as defined by Northouse (2019) is a process where the leader gives influence to a group of people to achieve a common goal together. People with good leadership skills that becomes good leaders are not naturally born like that, but are made (Sharma & Jain, 2013). In addition, it has lately become increasingly interesting for people to grow in this skill because someone with strong leadership will set a good example to others and help company or organization to achieve their goals better (Hao & Yazdanifard, 2015). Another research also found results supporting Hao, stating that leadership will create better team work that derives in employee satisfaction in their work and thus benefit the company (Nedovic et al., 2014;

Surji, 2014). With such a broad understanding of leadership, there are a lot of theories that explains leadership. One of which is identifying good leaders from their traits. Skills approach leadership does not talk about a list of what is needed for a successful leadership, but provides a basic understanding of an effective leadership (Northouse, 2019). These skills too are actually still driven by trait but seen from a broader perspective. Skills itself is a word with various definitions with various synonyms too. According to Cambridge dictionary, skill is defined as the ability to do an activity well (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022b). In leadership context there are three basic personal skills which are associated with effective administration. Those skills are technical, human and conceptual (Megheirkouni, 2016; Northouse, 2019). According to Northouse (2019), technical skills refer to the proficiency and knowledge from a specific field. These skills have an important part in producing the product that the organization or the department is supposed to produce. While human skills refer to the ability to work with humans or also usually known as social skills or people skills, these skills are very important to help a leader be effective in their work with their team and superior, how to relate and cooperate with each other, and create a positive work culture. The last skill is conceptual skill that refers to a person's ability to think and work with concepts. This means that the leader would be able to think about goals, vision, and other things that might be abstract or hypothetical.

3. Professional Development Program

A quick survey was done on the administrative staff at SPH previously in November 2020 to rate the relevance of the last PD's (November 2020) topic with their work from 1 (very irrelevant) to 5 (very relevant). 87 administrative staff responded out of 146 administrative staff; the mean score is 3.9 which is almost relevant but not quite yet. Hence, doesn't make the administrative staff eager to join and see it as an opportunity for them to grow. An informal interview was also done with five leaders at SPH in March 2021 at their offices regarding what they think professional development for administrative staff should look like and what they sense is important for administrative staff's growth. All these leaders agreed that administrative staff should grow holistically. They would

want the staff to grow spiritually and also in various skills, including leadership skills. Theories also discussed that in preparation of PD, there are a lot of factors to be considered. The first is to prepare PD topics. Browell (2000) states that PD topics should focus on the practical application of innovations and prepare staff for their responsibilities, which will help the organization to achieve the goals set. The way PD is conducted is also an important thing to prepare. For the purpose of knowing what instruction method will be effective, trainees need to be analyzed. Once the analysis has been made, method of instruction should be determined. None of which were executed well at SPH to support the administrative staff to grow.

Hence, it can be concluded that administrative staff's growth in their leadership skills is important and that could be done with a better use of the PD program. This is not only important for the staff, but also for the organization. A strong program for staff development will support staff to have better and stronger knowledge and skills that will help them to innovate and problem solve (Gregory, 2003). There needs to be a change in how administrative staff PD is executed in order to be able to help staff grow holistically including in their leadership skills, and be able to make even more positive contribution to the school and thus be a blessing even more to the community for the glory of Christ. And that would not be possible if administrative staff is not seen as an important thing and get the attention they need and deserves. Especially when talking about the PD program for administrative staff which is a perfect opportunity to help their growth. Therefore, this research aims to determine the skills need of administrative staff at SPH, especially in the leadership area, determine a PD program to help develop leadership skill for administrative staff, and to determine if PD is an effective way to develop leadership skills for administrative staff.

II. METHOD

In this study, researcher will be using evaluation study. The model that will be used in specific is CSE-UCLA (Center for The Study of Evaluation-University of California in Los Angeles) that consists of four steps: needs assessment, program planning, formative evaluation, and summative evaluation (Arikunto &

Jabar, 2018; Dewi & Ambiyar, 2019). In this model, the first step is to analyze the needs. In this step, researcher collected data through focus group discussion, interview, and observation what the issue is and what is the need. Interview will be done to school leaders, both academic and administrative. Interview method is chosen because it is an appropriate method to collect in-depth information on people's opinions and experiences, as well as their feelings through the non-verbal attitude (Bailey, 1994). While focus group discussion will be done to the administrative staff because it can help researcher to see various point of view at once. For the group size, different resources said different number of group size; from minimal 3 people until maximum 12 people (HERD, 2016; Mishra, 2016; Nyumba et al., 2018).

The next step is to plan based on the needs and testing the plan through validation by validators. Then, after the program is tested out, formative and summative evaluation will be done through post test and evaluation survey to receive feedback that could be followed up by the next researcher. The interview done was structured interview model and done through online video call. Interviews done will be documented in an audio recording to make sure of the quality, accuracy and completeness of the data. Audio recording will be made into a transcript and will be used for analysis. In this research, there will be five FGDs that will be done to five different groups based on campus location. FGDs will be documented in an audio recording to make sure of the quality, accuracy and completeness of the data. Audio recording will be made into a transcript and will be used for analysis. For PD evaluation, administrative staff will be given a survey as a post-test to assess their knowledge after the PD and also to evaluate the overall PD program. Survey will be done through online form and sent to administrative staff's email after the PD is done. In qualitative research, the data gathered is in a form of words. According to Mezmir (2020), analysis of this data consists of four activities: familiarization, data reduction, data display, and report writing or conclusion. This data analysis will be done for interview and FGD results. For the survey result, data analysis will be done by summarizing the answers too then be analyzed, similar to the FGD and interview results. Some of the questions that have numerical answers will be analyzed by counting the percentage of each answer. Other than that, data collected will be

analyzed by triangulating all the data received. In this research, triangulation will be done by comparing and analyzing between the interview, FGD, and observation.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Needs assessment is done through a series of interviews, FGDs, and observation. Interviews were done to 10 school leaders-five administrative leaders (four ET leaders and HRM) and five academic leaders (five HOS), while the FGD was done to administrative staff representatives from five campuses. Interview and FGD recordings were then transcribed and answers were summarized for each interview and FGD. Then all interviews between ET & HRM are combined and summarized, as well as interviews of HOS combined and summarized. The five FGDs are also combined and summarized. Then, summary from each groups are put side by side to analyze and see common themes. Researcher quickly noticed from the interview to the administrative leaders, that each of them mentioned the need for administrative staff to grow and learn more about taking initiatives and teamwork in regard to departments being used to work on their own and not collaborative and the fear of taking risks and thus making them wait for instructions only. 80% of the administrative leaders also mentioned that communications is a huge area that these staff need to grow in. Communications affects a lot of the work and plays a part in teamwork and initiative because without good communication skill, people can misinterpret and that could create misunderstanding and problem. 60% of them also states that these staff still need to learn about how the organization work and about service excellence-not only to external customers, but especially internal customers (colleagues). These align well with what all five academic leaders mentioned in their interviews. All of these academic leaders stated that they would like for their administrative staff to grow in their ability to take initiatives, to be more confident in speaking up, taking risk and making decisions. This alignment shows that whether it is the administrative leaders in the central office or the academic leaders spread across five campuses, they see the same issues and the same needs. Thus, ensuring that this indeed is a crucial need for the administrative staff.

The FGD was done to 28 administrative staff (five staff from SPHLC, five staff from SPHPV, five staff from SPHSC, four staff from SPHKV, nine staff from SPHLV). The staff included in the

discussion are from various departments, gender, age group, and also varied from their employment time at SPH and past experience before joining SPH. These administrative staff stated that they would really like to grow more in technical skills related to their day to day work. Another skill that they would really like to grow in is communications that could help them a lot in their daily work either to solve problems, delegate work, when communicating to colleagues or leaders or parents, handling complaints, and such. They also stated that better communication skills will really help them bridge their gap when working with their leaders. This connects to the issue that all academic leaders mentioned about the administrative staff not having the confidence to speak up and take initiatives. Through the FGD, the administrative staff mentioned that they do not know how to express their thoughts in a way that it would be well accepted by their leaders. Other skills that they were interested to grow in would be teamwork that is mentioned in four groups, patience was also mentioned by three groups, and time management. In addition, administrative staff's role in a school is to support the academic team. Thus, knowledge about academic side of the school would be important. This too have been mentioned by the academic leaders that the administrative staff were not really connected and involved in the academic side of the school. When clarified to the administrative staff in the FGD, they too mentioned that they feel knowledge about what Christian school is about, what is going on in the academic side of the school will be very important and even though they have been working for years at SPH, they have not know much about it as there is very minimum training about it. Thus, it can be concluded that through interview, FGD, observation and past research, that there are some leadership skills area that is needed by SPH's administrative staff. The skills includes communication, service excellence, decision making, taking initiative, team work, self management, and other technical skills depending on their area of work.

Table 1. Needs Assessment Result

Based on School Leaders	Based on Administrative Staff
Taking initiative	Problem solving and taking initiative
Teamwork	Teamwork
Communication	Communication
Confidence	Self-management
Service Excellence	Handling complaints and service excellence

Based on the data gathered, PD so far is not strong and is not well planned. Over the years, the PD have mainly focused on spiritual growth and development, but there is not much growth seen from it. They all agreed that a better more practical topics would be useful. It can also be concluded that the PD sessions are to be done in small groups with engaging hands-on activities. It could be a workshop with capita selecta and things like that. With the needs being clear, program planning is done next. The PD session would also involve more hands-on activities and done in smaller groups. It will be done four times per year with two hours sessions each. Skills cannot be attained only through a two-hour session, hence follow up would be important to have to ensure the skills are put to practice and the staff actually grows in that area. For immediate evaluation, a pre-test and post-test will be done to see the knowledge growth. However, the mini pilot trial session for this research will be limited to the communication skill session especially the verbal communication skill session. Communication skill needs can be divided into two categories, for the middle management level and higher, and the lower management level. The lower management level staff too have the needs for verbal and written communication.

Table 2. PD Structure

Frequency	Four times per year
Length of each session	Two hours
Mode of session	Hybrid or on-site
Session choice	Capita selecta, participants can choose focus topic that is more suitable
Session content	Theory, hands-on-activities

Focusing on verbal communication, this skill is key in the work field and is inevitable. During the FGD, administrative staff mentioned that in terms of verbal communication, they had difficulties when handling parent complaints. Other than that, they also mentioned difficulties in speaking up to their leaders, saying their thoughts and opinions especially because they are afraid their opinions would not be received well. Leaders have also identified the same things that they would like to see their staff being more confident to speak up. Thus, this also leads to discussion on assertive communication from a staff perspective. To ensure the plan is well planned, validation process is then done to six validators, discussing from three perspectives (English, instructional design, communication

theory). Overall, there were various minor inputs on the plan designed including grammatical error and also ensuring the power point is neat, with contrast colours, and have clear headings. Some other inputs were regarding alignment of pre-test and post-test questions and changing from open ended questions to multiple choice questions. Both of which are reviewed and adjusted to the plan. Next is from communication theory validator where both validators suggested to add a theory. One theory is short & straightforward, thus directly added to the material. However the second theory is longer and thus keeping in mind the time limitation, will be sent before the session in the form of video for participants to watch. These programs are tested on April 20th, 2022 and in a mix of hybrid and full online session. All three sessions are done simultaneously at this day, planned for a two-hour session from 13.00-15.00 (GMT +7). However, due to sudden circumstances of needs of meetings in several of the campuses, the sessions need to be shorten to one and a half hours a day before the PD is done. Due to limitations, the verbal communication session serves as the trial session, and done in a hybrid model where administrative staff in SPHLV campus are gathered in one room and the staff from the other four campuses join online in small groups per device. Overall, based on the evaluation response, participants were happy and satisfied with the session. Feedbacks were very positive across the board. The only minor input is regarding time where due to tight timing for the role play at the end, it made the session felt rushed and would be better to have a longer time. Therefore, it could be concluded that the verbal communication PD that serves as a trial for the design made was well received by the administrative staff and that they generally feel satisfied with the PD.

There are still areas to improve such as length of PD and also the proportion of PD time for the role play. In addition, better coordination about the time of PD with the academic team should also be done in order for the PD time to be more effective and uninterrupted. Looking at the post-test and evaluation form, it is clearly seen that there is a good improvement across all the questions which means the session was effective. Accuracy percentage increased in each of the questions. Even though accuracy percentage for question regarding responding to complaints is still quite low (under 50%), there is still an increase of about 5%. Other than that, accuracy

percentage for the other two additional questions are also still positive (more than 50%). This research has certain limitations that occurred due to situations that happened in the research. Mostly with time constraint, only a mini pilot trial was done and developed. Other topics were not fully developed, neither is a longer term curriculum or a follow up program.

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusion

Regarding the leadership skills needed by the administrative staff at SPH, it is found that the skills needed are communication, decision making, taking initiative, team work, and self management. It is also concluded that the type of PD program to help develop their leadership skills should be engaging with practice. Researcher also concluded that PD could be an effective way to help grow leadership skills for administrative staff. However, it should have a better follow-up program. It could be implied that a good PD program that is planned well according to the needs of the participants, would be very beneficial both for the administrative staff and the organization.

B. Suggestions

Discussions related to this research are still very limited and require input, suggestions for the next writer are to study more deeply and comprehensively about the Developing Leadership Skills in Administrative Staff Through Professional Development Program at School Pelita Harapan.

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