

Responsive Evaluation Of The Microleading Program In Strengthening Leadership Competence Of Islamic Education Management Students

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to evaluate the Microleading Program as a form of practice-based learning in the Islamic Education Management Study Program, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, UIN Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember. This program is designed to equip students with administrative skills through work simulations in an educational laboratory environment. The evaluation model used is *Responsive Evaluation* from Robert Stake, which emphasizes understanding stakeholder experiences and perceptions as the basis for assessing the success of the program. This study uses a qualitative approach with an evaluative case study type. Data was collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, with the main informants consisting of participating students, teaching lecturers, and choirs. Study Program. The results of the study show that the program runs according to the guidelines and has succeeded in forming students' basic competencies in the field of educational administration. In addition to technical impacts, affective impacts were also found such as increased confidence, ability to work together, and maturity of professional attitudes. However, the implementation of the program also faces obstacles in the form of limited facilities, lack of student involvement in planning, and variations in the quality of mentoring between classes. This research makes a theoretical contribution to the development of a more participatory and contextual educational evaluation model, and confirms that micro-work simulation programs can be a strategic means in the formation of student professional leadership. These findings provide a new direction for the evaluation of practice-based programs in Islamic higher education that are more responsive to the needs of participants and changing times.

INTRODUCTION

The Microleading Program is a practical course designed by the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training UIN KHAS Jember to equip students of the Islamic Education Management Study Program (MPI) with professional educational, administrative, and managerial competencies. This program functions as a practice-based learning vehicle that simulates the role of education administration personnel, including the management of human resources, offices, infrastructure, finance, and public relations (Hambali & Mu'alimin, 2020). Conceptually, this kind of practical learning is believed to be able to bridge the needs of the world of work with the learning outcomes of higher education graduates (Fikri, 2019).

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However, in practice, various studies show that practice-based learning programs often face implementation problems, such as insynchronization between curriculum objectives and student learning experiences, limited implementation support, and suboptimal program mentoring and evaluation processes (Verysanjaya, 2022).

Several previous research studies have shown that the evaluation of educational programs in general is divided into four main streams: (1) the evaluation of the CIPP model (*Context, Input, Process, Product*) (Ayyusufi et al., 2022; Bhakti et al., 2022) (2) Model *logic model* (Faizin & Kusumaningrum, 2023), (3) evaluation of performance achievements (Yunita, N., & Pratama, 2018), and (4) models *goal-free* or *countenance* (Shiddiq et al., 2024). The evaluation model of educational programs that are often used is quite diverse, especially in the context of research and policy-making in the education sector, such as character education (Wiratnyana et al., 2020; Jusar, I. R., Ambiyar, A., & Aziz, 2020), inclusive education (Gaddafi, 2023) up to the superhero school program (Harahap et al., 2024). However, research that uses *Responsive Evaluation* as the main approach is still relatively limited, especially for evaluating programs in higher education environments such as microleading programs (Abidin & Hafsa, 2019). According to (Widiastuti et al., 2024) this model provides greater space for participants to play a role in the evaluation process and emphasizes the importance of narratives and meanings built into learning. *Responsive Evaluation* Emphasizing stakeholder participation, narrative experiences, and meanings built during the learning process, to complement the limitations of conventional evaluation approaches. This gap is the basis for evaluating the Microleading Program using the *Responsive Evaluation*.

This paper aims to fill in the blank space in the literature by using the model *Responsive Evaluation* to evaluate the Microleading Program from three main dimensions: (1) how stakeholders understand the context and objectives of the program (*antecedence*), (2) how the implementation process took place and was responded to by the perpetrators (*transaction*), and (3) the impact of the program on student competence and character (*outcome*). Compared to conventional evaluation models, this approach is more suitable for practice-based education contexts because it pays attention to personal experiences, perceptions, and dynamics between participants. The three specific objectives of this study are: *First*, to identify the relevance and understanding of stakeholders to the Microleading Program; *Second*, to analyze the implementation process and interaction dynamics in the implementation of the microleading program; and *Third*, to evaluate the impact of the program on strengthening students' administrative skills and professional attitudes. With this focus, this article seeks to provide a comprehensive evaluation that not only assesses the performance of the program but also explores the meaning and perception of the implementers of the program in the context of Islamic higher education.

This research departs from the assumption that the Microleading Program can be an effective and meaningful practical learning model if evaluated through a responsive approach to the voice of the participants. This research proposes that the success of the program is not only determined by the curriculum structure or administrative achievements, but also by how students, tutors, and managers interpret and undergo the process. Therefore, the *Responsive Evaluation* approach is the main argumentative foundation that not only records the process, but also reflects the educational values contained in the implementation of the Microleading Program. The *Responsive Evaluation* model has the advantage of evaluating practice-based

and leadership programs in higher education. This model places participants as subjects in evaluation, allowing for a deeper understanding of the successes and constraints in program implementation. Therefore, *Responsive Evaluation* can be recommended as an evaluative approach that is adaptive, participatory, and meaningful. This evaluation is also expected to be a reference for educational institutions in designing and assessing contextual and sustainable programs.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach with an evaluative design to examine the implementation of the Microleading Program within the Islamic Education Management Study Program (MPI), focusing on Class C4 during the 2023–2024 academic year as the unit of analysis. The study aimed to describe and evaluate the program as it was enacted in real educational settings, emphasizing field-based experiences rather than hypothesis testing, in line with qualitative inquiry principles (Roulston & Halpin, 2022). The research design adopted the Responsive Evaluation model, operationalized through three interconnected stages: antecedence, transaction, and outcome. The antecedence stage explored stakeholders' understanding of program objectives, planning, and relevance through preliminary interviews and a review of program guideline documents. The transaction stage concentrated on direct observation of the Microleading implementation, including student interaction patterns, the roles of tutor lecturers, guidance mechanisms, and challenges encountered during the learning process.

The outcome stage assessed the program's impact on students' administrative competencies, professional attitudes, and work readiness based on reflections from participants, tutors, and program managers (Stufflebeam, 2002; Ali et al., 2024). Data were collected from purposively selected informants, including participating students, Microleading tutors, and the study program coordinator, using semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and documentation analysis of program manuals, schedules, implementation reports, and internal evaluation records (Patton, 2022). Data analysis was conducted thematically through stages of data reduction, categorization, display, and interpretation by relating empirical findings to the principles of Responsive Evaluation to identify the program's strengths and limitations (Merriam, 2016; Braun & Clarke, 2022). Data credibility was ensured through source and technique triangulation, as well as member checking with selected informants to confirm the alignment between analytical results and participants' actual experiences (Donkoh, 2023).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Antecedence (Context, Objectives, and Program Readiness)

Table 1

Findings Antecedence

Evaluation Focus	Code Thematic	Findings Home	Source of Informant	Evaluative Interpretation (Responsive)
<i>Antecedence</i>	Program Objectives	Students understand the program as a simulation of administrative work, but understanding comes too late	Student, Tutor, Lecturer	It is necessary to strengthen the initial orientation of the program so that the understanding is more systematic
	Program Relevance	The program is considered relevant to the needs of fieldwork	Choir. Study Program, Tutor Lecturer	Goals are appropriate, but the content needs to be adjusted to digitalization
	Program Socialization	Socialization is still lacking in dialogue and one-way informative	Students	Initial socialization needs to be participatory and reflective

The results of the interviews show that students, tutors, and study program heads have a relatively consistent understanding of the goals of the Microleading Program as stated in the Microleading Guidelines. This program is understood as a form of work simulation of educational administration, which is part of a compulsory course with a weight of 4 credits. One student stated, "*Microleading is like practicing work before actually going to school or the office, but at the beginning, we didn't really understand the direction of the big thing.*" The tutor lecturer also emphasized, "*This program is designed to familiarize students with the work rhythm of educational administration, not just ordinary lecture assignments*". The Head of the Study Program emphasized that Microleading is a concrete effort by the study program in fulfilling the learning outcomes of MPI graduates based on managerial skills. However, some students feel that the initial socialization is not systematic, so that an understanding of the goals of the program is only formed as the activity progresses. This shows the importance of strengthening at the initial orientation stage so that the program objectives are fully understood by all participants from the beginning of implementation.

The Microleading program is considered relevant to the needs of administrative skills in educational institutions. The tutor lecturer assesses that students gain practical experience in accordance with field work conditions, such as the preparation of official letters, the preparation of *financial* statements, and the management of digital documents. Students also feel that this practical activity clarifies the link between the theory courses they study and the reality of work. The Head of the Study Program sees that this practice-based learning model is very suitable for the character of the MPI Study Program, which emphasizes education management. However, some tutors propose that the substance of the program be updated regularly, especially by incorporating more up-to-date digital devices and education management information systems. Thus, Microleading can be a program that is not only relevant today but also adaptive to the dynamics of education in the future.

Based on the responsive evaluation instrument, stakeholder involvement in program planning is still limited to the level of study program heads and tutor lecturers. Students generally have not been involved in the design of activities or the preparation of modules. They only accept schedules and tasks that have been prepared without much room for discussion or initial input. The tutor lecturer said that the program was indeed structured based on the applicable guidelines and RPS, so there was not much room for flexibility in the planning stage. The Head of the Study Program stated that the form of student participation still focuses on the implementation stage, not planning. In responsive evaluation, this is an important note because involvement from the beginning will increase the participants' sense of ownership and motivation. Therefore, the opening of dialogue rooms from the program design stage is a strategic step to improve future implementation.

Transaction (Execution, Interaction, and Obstacle)

Table 2.

Findings Transaction

Evaluation Focus	Code Thematic	Findings Home	Source of Informant	Evaluative Interpretation (Responsive)
Transaction	Technical implementation	Practice activities are in accordance with the guidelines, but there are adjustments due to limited facilities	Tutor Lecturer, Student	Tutor flexibility supports fluency, but coordination systems need to be improved
	Interaction & communication	Tutor-student communication is quite active, but not evenly distributed between classes	Student, Tutor, Lecturer	There is a need for training and equalization between tutors
	Implementation constraints	Barriers arise from students' means and understanding of instruction	Tutor Lecturer, Student	Additional technical guidance is indispensable at the beginning of practice

The implementation of the Microleading Program takes place in accordance with the Microleading Guidelines, namely through a small group-based practice method guided directly by tutor lecturers. Students carry out simulations of administrative activities such as drafting official letters, making Work Plans and Cost Budgets (RKAB), and designing the organizational structure of schools or educational institutions. In general, the implementation of the program runs quite smoothly and systematically. However, in the field, several obstacles were found, including the uneven technical ability of students in understanding the format of administrative documents. Faced with this situation, some tutors make adjustments by providing hands-on examples, individual guidance, and case study-based simulations. The Head of the Study Program assesses that the adaptive ability of tutors is the key to the success of the program. A tutor explained, *"If the facilities are lacking, we usually replace them with case simulations and sample documents so that students still understand the flow"*. The student also confirmed this, *"Sometimes the tools are limited, but the lecturer helps with direct examples, so it can still run"*. In the perspective of *Responsive Evaluation*, the implementation of the program not only follows formal guidelines, but is also

determined by the flexibility of the implementers in responding to real conditions in the field in a contextual and oriented manner to the needs of the participants.

The interaction between students and tutor lecturers in the implementation of the program is quite active. Students feel that tutor lecturers are quite open, easy to discuss with, and provide clear direction, even though not all tutors have the same approach. Some students said that more intense communication occurred outside of practice hours through WhatsApp groups or informal discussions. The tutor also assessed that students were quite active and showed high initiative, especially during simulation practice. One student stated, *"We are quite free to ask questions to the lecturer, even outside of practice hours"*. However, the Head of Study Program noted that the coordination between tutors is not completely uniform, *"Each tutor has their own style, in the future there needs to be an equalization of patterns so that the quality is equal"*. From the manager's side, coordination between tutors and activity reporting is still individual, not documented in an integrated system. This is a challenge in ensuring uniformity of implementation between classes. Based on the principle of responsive evaluation, the success of interactions is determined by equal and open relationships, which can be continuously strengthened through tutor training and regular communication mechanisms.

The implementation of the Microleading Program cannot be separated from various obstacles. One of the main obstacles is the difficulty of students in understanding the format of administrative documents such as official letters, financial statements, and RKAB forms. Many students admitted that they felt confused at the early stage because they were not familiar with the administrative language and systematics of writing formal documents. In addition, the limited practice time makes the mentoring process not impossible for each participant. The limitations of practice tools, such as uneven computers and printers, are also obstacles that slow down the process of completing tasks. Tutor lecturers respond to this situation by providing templates and examples of real documents as a learning reference. This strategy has proven effective in helping students adapt faster. However, program managers realize that improvements in facilities and time management are still needed. Based on the principle of responsive evaluation, this obstacle shows the need for an adaptive strategy based on the needs of participants through improved facilities, technical debriefing, and more intensive individual mentoring.

Outcomes (Benefits, Indirect Impacts, and Sustainability)

Table 3.

Findings Outcomes

Evaluation Focus	Code Thematic	Findings Home	Source of Informant	Evaluative Interpretation (Responsive)
Outcome	Technical competence	Students are able to make official letters, reports, RKAB, etc.	Student, Tutor Lecturer	Effective programs form basic administrative skills
	Soft skills & karakter	There is an increase in confidence, teamwork, and courage to perform	Students	The program has a significant affective impact beyond the initial target
	Sustainability & advice	It is recommended that the program be continued with updates	All Stakeholders	Recommendations demonstrate strong support

Evaluation Focus	Code Thematic	Findings Home	Source of Informant	Evaluative Interpretation (Responsive)
		to the guidelines and digital system		for the sustainability of the program

The Microleading program makes a significant contribution to strengthening students' basic managerial skills, especially in the field of educational administration. Students said that they are now more confident in making official letters, compiling meeting agendas, and understanding the flow of school bureaucracy. Tutor lecturers also noted the improvement in the quality of documents made by students from week to week. The Head of the Study Program sees that the results of practice show the ability of students who are getting closer to the work standards of education administration personnel. A student said, *"Now I am more confident in making official letters and understand the flow"*. The tutor lecturer also emphasized, *"The student administration product is much neater and in accordance with the standard than at the beginning of practice"*. With a hands-on approach, students not only gain procedural knowledge but also internalize work values such as rigor, responsibility, and order. These findings show that the program has succeeded in forming basic technical competencies according to the profile of MPI Study Program graduates.

In addition to the cognitive impact and technical skills, the program also influences the affective aspects of students. Some participants admitted that they were more confident in public speaking, dared to lead discussions, and were more active in campus organizations after participating in Microleading. The tutor lecturer also said that students seemed more disciplined and used to working in a structured system. Choir. The study program emphasized that this change in attitude is an added value of the program, which is not explicitly written in the guidelines, but is very relevant in the development of leadership character. However, some students feel that the practice time is too short to explore all skills to the fullest. This shows that, in addition to hard skills, this program has succeeded in touching the soft skills dimension of students, and needs to be designed more comprehensively in the future to deepen the long-term impact.

The majority of stakeholders support the sustainability of the Microleading Program with a number of recommendations for its development. Students hope that there will be technical briefings at the beginning, as well as a reflective discussion room after the practice is over. The tutor lecturer suggested that the guidelines be revised periodically by involving lecturers, students, and alumni. Choir. The study program responded positively to this proposal and stated the need for digital integration, both in reporting, guidance, and evaluation. Responsive evaluation emphasizes the importance of listening to stakeholder voices in determining the direction of program development. Therefore, the implementation of Microleading in the future needs to strengthen the monitoring system, expand participation, and update the learning approach to be more relevant to field needs and educational technology developments.

Discussion

The Microleading Program is understood by students, tutors, and study program heads as a systematic effort to equip MPI Study Program students with managerial skills that are applicable in the field of educational administration. This is in line with the statement in the

Microleading handbook that this program is a compulsory 4-credit course based on work simulation. Students consider that this activity is a form of direct practice of management materials that were previously theoretical. These findings are in line with the principle of opinion (Nasution, 2023; Suleman, 2024; Wahidin et al., 2022) which states that learning through hands-on experience allows participants to construct knowledge meaningfully. However, the main obstacle found is that the socialization of program objectives at the beginning of implementation has not been optimal. This shows that clarity of program direction from the beginning is very important so that students not only undergo administrative activities, but also understand the strategic value of the program in the framework of professional and competency formation.

Model approach *Responsive Evaluation*, the stakeholder's understanding of the program objectives is the starting point that determines the direction of the evaluation. When students only undergo the program as an academic obligation without a functional understanding, the meaning of the learning experience becomes superficial. In addition, student involvement in program orientation is also still one-way. Research (Aufa & Lestari, 2023) Regarding student leadership training, it shows that the involvement of participants from the planning stage increases motivation and understanding of the objectives of the activity. Therefore, the implementation of the Microleading program orientation needs to be redesigned to be more interactive, accompanied by an introduction to the case or a mini simulation. This step is believed to improve the *sense of purpose* of students and strengthen the position of Microleading not only as a task, but as a space for professional growth. These adjustments also encourage participants' affective engagement as part of a participatory and reflective evaluation process.

The Microleading program has been implemented by following the flow and stages set out in the official guidelines, but the dynamics of implementation show that flexibility is a key aspect in the success of the activity. Tutors make adjustments to time, space, and practice media when facing technical constraints such as limited facilities or tight schedules. This is in line with the concept of *transaction* in responsive evaluation, which is the process of implementing a program that is not only focused on the plan, but also on adaptation to the context of program implementation. Students also show adaptive responses to changes that occur. They can still complete tasks well even if the practice conditions are not always ideal. Research (Ansarika et al., 2024) Simulation-based training shows that the success of the implementation is not solely determined by the availability of facilities, but by the quality of interaction between participants and facilitators (Faruq; 2022; Silviana, 2025). Therefore, the adaptation strategy carried out by tutor lecturers is an important factor that needs to be recognized as a form of field innovation.

The relationship between students, tutor lecturers, and the Study Program Management Unit (UPPS) is also an important factor in ensuring the smooth running of activities. The results of the study show that communication during practice is quite active, both directly and through communication media such as WhatsApp. Students feel comfortable discussing with tutors, although not all receive equal guidance. Some students revealed that the clarity of instruction and consistency between classes still need to be improved. This reflects the imbalance in coordination between implementers. Responsive evaluation assesses not only the process from a structural point of view, but also from the

interpersonal relationships built during the program. Research (Utomo, 2023), showing that an open and supportive relationship between lecturers and students in practice-based activities has a very significant impact on the effectiveness of learning. Therefore, it is important for study program managers to build an integrated coordination system and regular briefing for tutor lecturers, to equalize understanding and improve the quality of interaction throughout Microleading classes.

The Microleading program has been proven to have a significant impact on improving students' administrative skills, including the ability to write official letters, prepare financial reports, and file documents. Students said that this practical experience helped them understand the reality of working in educational institutions. These findings support research (Ayaturrahman & Rahayu, 2023; Umaroh & Bahtiar, 2022), which states that real simulation-based activities are able to increase students' readiness to face the challenges of the world of work. Tutors and heads of study programs also said that the quality of student administration products has increased over time. The evaluation must capture the impact felt directly by the participants, not just from numerical outcome indicators. Thus, the success of Microleading can not only be seen from the administrative output, but also from the growth of procedural skills, work rigor, and basic managerial skills, which are important foundations for graduates of the Islamic Education Management Study Program.

In addition to the technical impact, the program also has an influence on aspects of students' character and soft skills, which are not explicitly stated in the program's objectives. Students show an increase in confidence, the ability to work in a team, and the courage to take a role in campus activities. Some students even said that after participating in Microleading, they were more daring to appear in formal forums. These findings are in line with social learning theories from Sudarsono, (2024), which emphasize that learning that occurs in social contexts can shape individual patterns of attitudes and behaviors. Research by (Rarasati et al., 2022; Saski & Sudarwanto, 2021; Zativalen et al., 2022) It also reinforces that group work-based programs have a long-term impact on student leadership. So, it can be concluded that Microleading has the potential as a means of building leadership character, not just as an administrative exercise. This is an important novelty that expands the scope of evaluation of educational laboratory-based practice programs.

Table 4.

Findings Evaluation

Evaluation Dimensions	Findings	Description of Key Findings	Evaluative Implications
<i>Antecedence</i>	Stakeholder understanding	The Microleading program is understood as learning administrative practices based on work simulations that are relevant to the world of work, but the socialization of the program's objectives at the beginning is still not optimal.	It is necessary to strengthen the initial orientation that is more interactive so that students understand the strategic value of the program, not just an academic obligation.
	Participant involvement	The orientation of the program is still one-way and has not involved students in the meaning of the program's objectives.	Student involvement from the early stages can increase motivation, sense of purpose, and affective involvement of participants.

Evaluation Dimensions	Findings	Description of Key Findings	Evaluative Implications
Transaction	Implementation flexibility	Tutors adapt to the limitations of facilities, time, and field conditions without hindering learning outcomes.	Tutor flexibility is a key factor in success and needs to be recognized as a best practice practice).
	Interaction and communication	The interaction between students, tutors, and UPPS is quite active, but the guidance and clarity of instruction are not evenly distributed between classes.	An integrated coordination system and regular briefing are needed for tutors to equalize the perception and quality of mentoring.
Outcome	Technical skills	Students experience improved administrative skills such as filing, drafting official letters, and financial statements.	The program is effective in increasing students' job readiness in the field of educational administration.
	Karakter & soft skills	There is an increase in confidence, teamwork, responsibility, and the courage to take on leadership roles.	Microleading has the potential to be a means of character formation and student leadership, beyond the technical objectives of administration.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the study show that this program has succeeded in achieving its main goal as a medium for practice training of educational administration practices based on work simulations. Through the implementation stage of the microleading program, the spirit of student participation is the key to success in the midst of limited facilities and time. The program has also been proven to have a real impact, not only on technical skills, but also on student character dimensions such as confidence, work ethic, and collaborative abilities. Thus, the Microleading Program deserves to be called an integrative learning model that combines academic aspects, professional practice, and student leadership character building.

Theoretically, this study expands the understanding of the evaluation of higher education programs by proving that the *Responsive Evaluation* is able to capture the hidden dimensions of the program's processes and impacts, which conventional evaluation models cannot reach. The practical implications of this study include the need for improvements at the orientation stage, the involvement of participants in planning, and the integration of digital systems in the implementation and reporting of activities.

The recommendation for further research is to track the long-term impact on alumni who have participated in this program, as well as explore the potential replication of the Microleading program as a practice-based learning model in other study programs that have similar characteristics in the field of management and education.

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