

Analysis of Esa Unggul University Students' Preferences for Leadership Seminars Using Conjoint Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This research addresses the need to understand student preferences in leadership seminar design at Esa Unggul University and aims to identify the seminar attributes that most strongly influence participation decisions. A quantitative approach was applied using Conjoint Analysis, involving 100 active students from various study programs who are members of the Student Executive Board (BEM). Data were gathered through structured questionnaires and analyzed to estimate utility scores and relative importance values across five attributes: seminar topic, speaker, delivery format, participation cost, and benefits. The findings show that students favor seminars on Leadership and Entrepreneurship, delivered by expert lecturers, implemented in a hybrid format, priced between IDR 20,000 and 50,000, and offering certificates combined with SKP or competency recognition. Importance value analysis indicates that speaker credibility, cost considerations, and topic relevance are the dominant factors shaping student preferences. Model validation results demonstrate strong predictive accuracy, with a Pearson correlation of 0.815 and Kendall's tau of 0.407, both statistically significant. These results provide an empirical basis for universities and event organizers to develop leadership seminars that better align with student expectations, thereby improving engagement and program effectiveness.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership competence is widely recognized as a critical capability for university students, particularly those engaged in student organizations, as it contributes to character formation, the development of soft skills, and readiness for future leadership roles [1], [2]. Despite the growing emphasis on leadership development in higher education, many

leadership programs—especially seminars—are still designed based on organizers' assumptions rather than empirically grounded student preferences. This mismatch often results in suboptimal participation and limited program effectiveness, indicating a practical challenge in aligning leadership seminar designs with students' actual needs.

In response to this issue, higher education institutions require an evidence-based approach to understand how students evaluate different seminar characteristics. One strategic effort to address this problem is the application of analytical methods that capture trade-offs among multiple seminar attributes, such as topic relevance, speaker credibility, delivery format, cost, and perceived benefits. By systematically analyzing these attributes, universities can redesign leadership seminars to better align with participant expectations and enhance engagement outcomes. Accordingly, this study aims to examine the preferences of Esa Unggul University students toward leadership seminars and to identify the attributes that most strongly influence their attendance decisions. Specifically, this research seeks to measure the relative utility and importance of key seminar attributes using Conjoint Analysis, thereby providing a structured basis for decision-making in leadership program planning.

From a theoretical perspective, this study is grounded in leadership development theory and student involvement theory, which emphasize experiential learning, contextual leadership practice, and active participation as central to effective leadership education [3], [4]. Leadership seminars function as formal learning interventions that complement organizational experiences by offering conceptual frameworks, role models, and networking opportunities [5]. Furthermore, preference-based decision theory underpins the use of Conjoint Analysis, as it assumes that individual choices are determined by the combined evaluation of multiple attributes rather than by a single factor [6].

Several previous studies have applied Conjoint Analysis to examine preferences in educational and training contexts, such as instructional formats, online learning attributes, and leadership development programs [6]–[8]. These studies consistently highlight the importance of speaker quality, content relevance, and delivery flexibility. However, most existing research focuses on general student populations or instructional settings, with limited attention to leadership seminars within student organizational environments, particularly in Indonesian higher education. This study addresses that gap by focusing on Student Executive Board (BEM) members, who represent a segment with high leadership exposure and distinct expectations, thereby offering a more contextual and practice-oriented contribution.

It is expected that the results of this research will provide practical and theoretical benefits. Practically, the findings can serve as a reference for universities and event organizers in designing leadership seminars that are more relevant, affordable, and attractive to students. Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on leadership education by integrating preference analysis into the context of student organizational development. Ultimately, aligning seminar design with student preferences is anticipated to enhance participation, learning outcomes, and the overall effectiveness of leadership development initiatives in higher education.

2. METHOD

This study adopts a quantitative research design using the Conjoint Analysis technique to examine students' preferences for leadership seminar attributes [9]. This approach is chosen because it enables the simultaneous evaluation of multiple attributes and estimates their relative influence on individual decision-making, allowing a more comprehensive understanding of preference structures [6], [10]. The research population comprises Esa Unggul University students who are actively involved in the Student Executive Board (BEM), as this group has direct experience and relevance in leadership-related activities. A sample of 100 respondents was determined using purposive sampling, based on their organizational involvement and exposure to leadership seminars [11]. Data on BEM membership were obtained from the University's Student Affairs Office, and an online questionnaire link was disseminated via WhatsApp and Line communication groups. From the distributed invitations, 100 students voluntarily participated and completed the questionnaire, meeting the targeted sample size and ensuring data adequacy [12].

The study examines five core seminar attributes, namely seminar topic, speaker, delivery format, participation cost, and benefits or incentives. Each attribute is operationalized into three levels, developed by considering standard seminar practices in higher education and guided by established principles in conjoint attribute construction [13],[15]. This structure allows respondents to evaluate realistic combinations of seminar characteristics. Data collection was conducted using an online survey instrument created with Google Forms, which presented respondents with a set of seminar profiles composed of different attribute combinations. Participants were asked to rate each profile using a four-point scale, reflecting their level of preference [16]. The collected data were then processed using Conjoint Analysis to estimate part-worth utility scores and relative importance values for each attribute, thereby revealing the contribution of individual attributes to overall student preferences [17]. In accordance with the Conjoint Analysis framework, the attributes and their levels were defined to represent the key dimensions influencing students' selection of leadership seminars [14]. A detailed description of these variables is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Variables and Attribute Levels

Attribute	Description	Level
Seminar Topic	Type of material presented during the leadership seminar.	Leadership & Entrepreneurship Digital Leadership Public Speaking & Leadership
Speaker	Category of the individual delivering the seminar	Expert Lecturer Professional Practitioner Alumni Speaker
Activity Format	Method through which the seminar is conducted	Online Offline Hybrid
Cost	Required registration fee for participants.	Free IDR 20,000–50,000 IDR 50,000-100.000
Benefits / Incentives	Form of rewards or additional value received by participants.	Certificate Only Certificate + SKP Certificate + SKP + Competency

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before conducting the Conjoint Analysis, descriptive statistics were used to present the characteristics of the respondents. These descriptive results include gender distribution and study program.

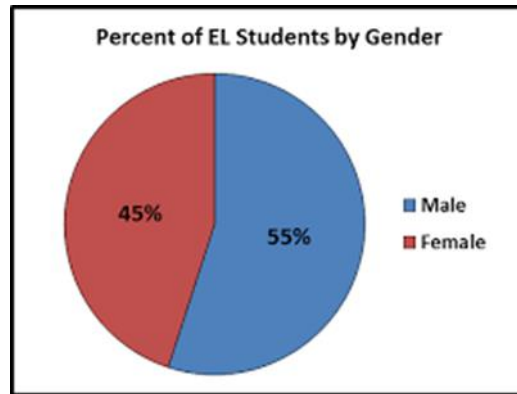


Figure 1. Gender Distribution

Figure 1 presents the gender distribution of the respondents. Out of 100 participants, 45% were male, and 55% were female, indicating a slight dominance of female respondents. To further describe the sample, Table 2 presents the distribution of respondents by study program.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents

Study Program	Frecuency
Education	22
Management	18
Communication	15
Informatic	14
Law	12
Psychology	19
Total	100
	Respondents

Table 2 presents the distribution of respondents by study program. Out of 100 respondents, the largest group consisted of Management students (22%), followed by Communication (18%), Informatics (15%), Law (14%), Psychology (12%), and Education/Other programs (19%). This indicates that the respondents come from diverse academic backgrounds, providing a representative sample for analyzing seminar preferences. Table 3 presents the results of the conjoint analysis based on the Utility Estimate values. These utility estimates are used to identify respondents' preferences according to the levels within each attribute.

Table 3. Conjoint Analysis Results: *Utility Estimate*

Utilities			
Attribute	Level	Utility Estimate	Std. Error
Seminar Topic	Basic Leadership	-0.033	0.037
	Leadership & Team Management	-0.062	0.043
	Leadership & Entrepreneurship	0.095	0.043
Speaker	Expert Lecturer	0.027	0.037
	Practitioner / Professional	-0.047	0.043
	Alumni / Successful Figure	0.020	0.043
Seminar Format	Offline (In-person)	-0.002	0.037
	Online	-0.014	0.043
	Hybrid	0.016	0.043
Cost	Free	-0.015	0.037
	IDR 20,000 – 50,000	0.040	0.043
	IDR 50,000 – 100,000	-0.025	0.043
Benefit	Certificate Only	-0.025	0.037
	Certificate + SKP/Competency	0.070	0.043
	Certificate + Additional Material / Networking	-0.045	0.043
	Constant	3.596	0.034

Based on the results shown in Table 3, the Utility Estimate values are used to determine the preference levels of the majority of respondents.

1. For the seminar topic attribute, the highest Utility Estimate is found in Leadership & Entrepreneurship, with a value of 0.095. This indicates that the majority of respondents prefer seminar topics related to Leadership & Entrepreneurship.
2. For the speaker attribute, the highest Utility Estimate value is found in *Expert Lecturers*, with a utility estimate of 0.027. This means that most respondents prefer seminars led by expert lecturers.
3. For the seminar format attribute, the highest Utility Estimate value is found in the *Hybrid* format, with a utility estimate of 0.016. This shows that the majority of respondents prefer hybrid seminar formats.
4. For the cost attribute, the highest Utility Estimate value is found in the fee range of *Rp 20,000 – Rp 50,000*, with a utility estimate of 0.040. This indicates that most respondents prefer seminar costs within this range.
5. For the benefit attribute, the highest Utility Estimate value is found in *Certificate + SKP/Competency*, with a utility estimate of 0.070. This means that the majority of respondents prefer benefits in the form of a certificate accompanied by SKP/competency credits.

Table 4 presents the importance values. These importance values are used to determine which factors the majority of respondents consider most important.

Table 4. Conjoint Analysis Results: Importance Values

Attribute	Importance Value
Seminar Topic	20.280
Speaker	20.974
Seminar Format	19.263
Cost	20.752
Benefit	18.731
Averaged Importance Score	-

Based on the results in Table 4, the Importance Values are used to determine which factors are most important to the majority of respondents. The highest Importance Values are observed in the Speaker, Cost, and Seminar Topic attributes, with values of 20.974, 20.752, and 20.280, respectively. This indicates that the majority of respondents consider the Speaker, Cost, and Seminar Topic to be the most important factors.

Table 5. Conjoint Analysis Results: Accuracy Testing

Correlations ^a		
Correlation Measure	Value	Sig.
Pearson's R	0.815	0.000
Kendall's Tau	0.407	0.015

a. Correlations between observed and estimated preferences

Based on the results shown in Table 5, the Pearson correlation value is 0.815 and is significant with $\text{Sig} = 0.000 < 0.05$, while the Kendall's tau correlation value is 0.407 and is significant with $\text{Sig} = 0.015 < 0.05$. This indicates that the actual ratings and the estimated ratings have a strong (and significant) linear relationship overall. In other words, the ratings based on the estimated results are highly accurate and closely aligned with the actual ratings for the majority of respondents.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that Esa Unggul University students exhibit clear, structured preferences for leadership seminar attributes, which can be effectively explained using the Conjoint Analysis framework. The preference for the *Leadership and Entrepreneurship* topic indicates that students value seminar content that not only strengthens leadership capacity but also equips them with entrepreneurial insights relevant to career readiness and self-development. This result aligns with the leadership development literature, which emphasizes integrating leadership skills with innovation, initiative, and real-world problem-solving to enhance student engagement and future employability [18], [2].

The dominance of *expert lecturers* as the most preferred speaker category suggests that credibility, academic authority, and perceived expertise remain central considerations for students when evaluating seminar quality. This finding is consistent with previous

studies showing that speaker competence significantly influences perceived value and learning effectiveness in leadership and training programs [19], [20]. Compared to practitioners or alums speakers, expert lecturers may be perceived as offering more structured, theory-based, and academically reliable perspectives, particularly important for students in formal organizational leadership roles.

Regarding delivery mode, the preference for a *hybrid seminar format* reflects students' demand for flexibility without sacrificing interaction quality. This outcome supports recent educational research indicating that hybrid models balance accessibility and engagement by combining the convenience of online participation with the experiential benefits of face-to-face interaction [21], [22]. In the context of student organizations, such flexibility allows participants to manage academic, organizational, and personal responsibilities more effectively.

Cost considerations also play a crucial role in shaping student preferences. The results show that a moderate fee range (IDR 20,000–50,000) is preferred over free or higher-cost options. This suggests that students may associate reasonable pricing with higher perceived quality while still maintaining affordability. Similar findings have been reported in preference-based studies, where moderate pricing is often interpreted as a signal of the program's value and seriousness [23]. Excessively high fees may act as participation barriers, while free seminars may be perceived as less exclusive or less valuable.

In terms of benefits, the strong preference for *certificates, combined with SKP or competency recognition, highlights students' instrumental orientation* toward formal acknowledgment of their participation. This supports student involvement theory, which argues that students are more motivated to engage in extracurricular activities when outcomes are formally recognized and contribute to their academic or professional profiles [24]. Certification linked to competency or credit systems provides tangible returns that extend beyond short-term learning experiences.

The importance-value analysis further reinforces these interpretations by showing that the *speaker, cost, and seminar topic* are the most influential attributes in decision-making. This indicates that students prioritize content relevance, financial feasibility, and speaker credibility before considering format or additional benefits. These findings are consistent with earlier conjoint-based studies in educational contexts, which emphasize that perceived academic value and economic considerations are primary determinants of participation decisions [25], [9]. Finally, the high Pearson correlation and significant Kendall's tau confirm that the Conjoint Analysis model accurately represents students' actual preferences. This supports prior methodological research stating that conjoint models are robust tools for capturing complex preference structures in educational and training program design [10]. Overall, this study extends previous research by applying Conjoint Analysis specifically to leadership seminars within student organizational settings, thereby offering contextual insights rarely addressed in earlier studies and providing a practical decision-making framework for leadership program development in higher education.

5. CONCLUSION

The results of the Conjoint Analysis indicate that several key attributes influence students' preferences for leadership seminars. Based on the Utility Estimate values, students prefer the Leadership & Entrepreneurship topic, expert lecturers as speakers, a hybrid seminar format, a fee of Rp 20,000–Rp 50,000, and benefits in the form of a certificate plus SKP/competency credits.

Furthermore, the Importance Values show that the most decisive attributes in decision-making are speaker, cost, and seminar topic. This emphasizes that students prioritize the speaker's credibility, affordability, and topic relevance before deciding to attend a seminar. The model accuracy test, conducted using Pearson correlation (0.815; $p < 0.05$) and Kendall's tau (0.407; $p < 0.05$), demonstrates that the estimated model closely aligns with the respondents' actual preferences. Thus, Conjoint Analysis is considered effective in mapping students' preferences.

Overall, these findings provide insight into students' desire for leadership seminars that are relevant, affordable, flexible, and delivered by competent speakers. Implementing these recommendations is expected to help the university enhance student engagement and ensure that leadership programs are more aligned with their needs.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations that open opportunities for future research. The attributes included in the Conjoint Analysis were limited; therefore, future studies may incorporate additional factors such as seminar duration, interaction methods, or organizer reputation to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of student preferences. The sample was also restricted to students from one institution, so expanding the respondent base across multiple universities could improve the generalizability of the findings. Future research may also employ other approaches, such as choice-based conjoint or experimental designs, to capture real decision-making behavior better.

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