

The Impact of Interpersonal Leadership and Structural Leadership on Human Development in DIGNITY Student Association at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

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ABSTRACT - This study examines the effectiveness of Head of Department (HOD) leadership within the Digital Business Student Association (DIGNITY) at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia. The primary objective was to evaluate how interpersonal and professional leadership dimensions, as formulated in the "Leaders Curriculum," influence human development outcomes such as trust, psychological safety, and personal growth from the perspective of organization members. The research employed a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional survey design. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed to a total population of 46 staff-level functionaries across eight different departments. The analysis involved descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression to determine the relationship between the leadership variables and member development. The findings indicate that the leadership model collectively explains 76.5% of the variance in human development. While both dimensions received high descriptive scores, hypothesis testing revealed that only interpersonal leadership serves as a significant partial predictor of member growth. In contrast, professional or structural leadership did not show a statistically significant independent effect. These results suggest that in a student-led environment, relational qualities specifically empathy and character understanding are the primary catalysts for fostering a sense of belonging and developmental progress. The implications of this study highlight a necessary shift from purely administrative management to a human-centric leadership model. To optimize organizational sustainability and member satisfaction, student organizations should prioritize emotional intelligence and mentorship over formal task coordination. This study validates the "Leaders Curriculum" as an effective framework for institutionalizing supportive leadership culture, offering a strategic roadmap for other campus organizations seeking to enhance their human resource development.

INTRODUCTION

Human resources are the cornerstone of organizational sustainability, where the quality of interaction and leadership determines the achievement of collective goals. As social beings, humans naturally require effective interaction within social spaces (Fajriah et al., 2024). From a human development perspective, student organizations serve as critical environments for fostering responsibility, communication, and trust. Consequently, examining leadership effectiveness at the departmental level is highly relevant.

In response to dynamic organizational needs, the Digital Business Student Association (DIGNITY) UPI developed the Leaders Curriculum. This framework shifts the leadership focus from mere task coordination to building a sustainable organizational culture based on core values such as empathy, intensive communication, and mutual trust. Leadership here is defined as a supportive process for member development rather than just formal direction. However, a significant gap exists as there is no clear mapping of how HOD leadership effectiveness aligns with these values from the members' perspective. Leadership success is increasingly defined by the ability to build trust and psychological safety rather than just managing tasks. Academically, most student leadership evaluations remain purely administrative or general.

Human resources are widely seen as central to achieving sustainable organizational performance, with leadership and interaction quality shaping how effectively collective goals are reached¹²³. In higher education, leadership that embeds sustainability and supports people is linked to stronger organizational commitment, trust, and long-term resilience (Iqbal & Ahmad., 2021). Campus organizations function as important arenas for student leadership development, where communication, responsibility, and collaboration are practiced in real contexts⁸⁹. Interpersonal communication that is two-way, inclusive, and empathetic increases group cohesiveness, participation, and the effectiveness of work programs in student organizations (Kusuma et al., 2025). In response to sustainability demands, universities are increasingly called to adopt leadership models that go beyond task control toward sustainable, authentic, and supportive leadership, which shape culture and values over time. Sustainable and authentic leadership in higher education has been shown to foster positive organizational culture, trust, and commitment, which are key for sustaining institutional performance and innovation. Leadership effectiveness today is also judged by the capacity to build trust, psychological safety, and supportive environments that enable members to learn and take interpersonal risks without fear, rather than simply manage tasks. Empathetic leadership is associated with better relationships, attitudes, and well-being in organizations, while inclusive and supportive leadership behaviors enhance satisfaction and engagement in educational settings (Atuahene et al., 2021).

Within student leadership, member evaluations of leaders' communication, approachability, and contributions are increasingly used to assess effectiveness and to guide leadership development efforts that align with institutional or organizational frameworks.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Research Design and Approach

This study employs a quantitative approach utilizing a cross-sectional survey design. The quantitative method was selected to structuredly measure member perceptions of Head of Department (HOD) leadership based on the indicators formulated in the Leaders Curriculum. A cross-sectional design was adopted as data collection occurred within a single specific timeframe to capture respondents' perceptions at the time of the study.

Population and Sampling

The research population consists of all staff-level functionaries within the structure of the DIGNITY Student Association at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Tasikmalaya Campus. The sampling technique used is total sampling (saturated sampling), where the entire population serves as research respondents. The total sample includes 46 staff members distributed across eight departments:

People and Organization Development, Creative and Innovative, Creative Arts and Illustration, External Affairs, Internal Affairs, Strategy and Succession Development, Secretariat, and Creative Economy. Staff members are positioned as the primary unit of analysis because they are deemed capable of providing an objective, bottom-up assessment of HOD leadership practices.

Data Collection Technique

Primary data was collected through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The research instrument was developed based on the core values of the Leaders Curriculum and designed using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). This instrument measures three research variables: Interpersonal Leadership (X1), Professional/Structural Leadership (X2), and Human Development (Y1). Variable X1 comprises five items, X2 consists of four items, and Y1 includes seven items.

Data Analysis Methods

Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS. The initial stages involved validity testing using the Pearson Bivariate correlation technique and reliability testing via Cronbach's Alpha to ensure instrument feasibility. Following this, descriptive analysis was performed to illustrate the score tendencies for each variable. As a prerequisite for further analysis, the study conducted classical assumption tests, including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests. The criteria utilized included significance values above 0.05 for normality, Tolerance values > 0.10 and VIF < 10 to indicate the absence of multicollinearity, and a random distribution of residual points to ensure no heteroscedasticity.

Instrument Validity and Reliability

Validity testing using Pearson Bivariate Correlation confirmed that all items for Interpersonal Leadership (X1.1– X1.5), Professional/Structural Leadership (X2.1–X2.4), and Human Development (Y1.1–Y1.7) yielded a significance level of 0.001. Since these values fall below the 0.05 threshold, all 16 indicators are statistically valid and relevant to members' experiences in assessing HOD leadership at DIGNITY. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha showed high internal consistency across all variables: Interpersonal Leadership (0.856), Professional Leadership (0.843), and Human Development (0.944). Every variable exceeded the 0.70 reliability threshold, indicating high stability in capturing the organizational climate.

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive results indicate that all variables fall into the "Very High" category. Mean scores were recorded as follows: Interpersonal Leadership (X1) at 4.5130, Professional Leadership (X2) at 4.4783, and Human Development (Y1) at 4.5776. The highest average in Human Development suggests that members perceive a strong impact of leadership on their personal growth and relational quality. The slightly higher score of X1 compared to X2 implies that relational aspects like empathy and communication are more prominent in the members' experience than administrative or structural functions. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for this study.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
X1_Total	46	3,00	5,00	4,5130	,54103
X2_Total	46	3,00	5,00	4,4783	,58648
Y1_Total	46	2,71	5,00	4,5776	,56017
Valid N (listwise)	46				

Classical Assumption Tests

The model meets the necessary prerequisites for multiple linear regression. While composite scores showed slight deviations, visual inspection of residual histograms and Normal P-P Plots confirmed that residuals follow a normal distribution pattern. Multicollinearity is not an issue, with Tolerance values at 0.226 and VIF at 4.427. Furthermore, scatterplot analysis showed a random distribution of residuals above and below the zero line, indicating no heteroscedasticity. Table 2 shows the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

Table 2. Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

			X1_Total	X2_Total	Y1_Total
N			46	46	46
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean		4,5130	4,4783	4,5776
	Std. Deviation		,54103	,58648	,56017
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute		,224	,222	,231
	Positive		,184	,187	,225
	Negative		-,224	-,222	-,231
Test Statistic			,224	,222	,231
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) ^c			<,001	<,001	<,001
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed) ^d	Sig.		,000	,000	,000
	99% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	,000	,000	,000
		Upper Bound	,000	,000	,000

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

d. Lilliefors' method based on 10000 Monte Carlo samples with starting seed 2000000.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

The regression model yielded an R value of 0.875 and an R-Square of 0.765, indicating that leadership styles explain 76.5% of the variance in Human Development within DIGNITY. The remaining 23.5% is attributed to external factors outside the scope of this study. The regression equation is formulated as: $Y1 = 0.482 + 0.709X1 + 0.200X2$. Both leadership dimensions exert a positive influence on member development, though the interpersonal dimension contributes more significantly to the formation of the developmental experience. Figure 1 shows the scatterplot for regression.

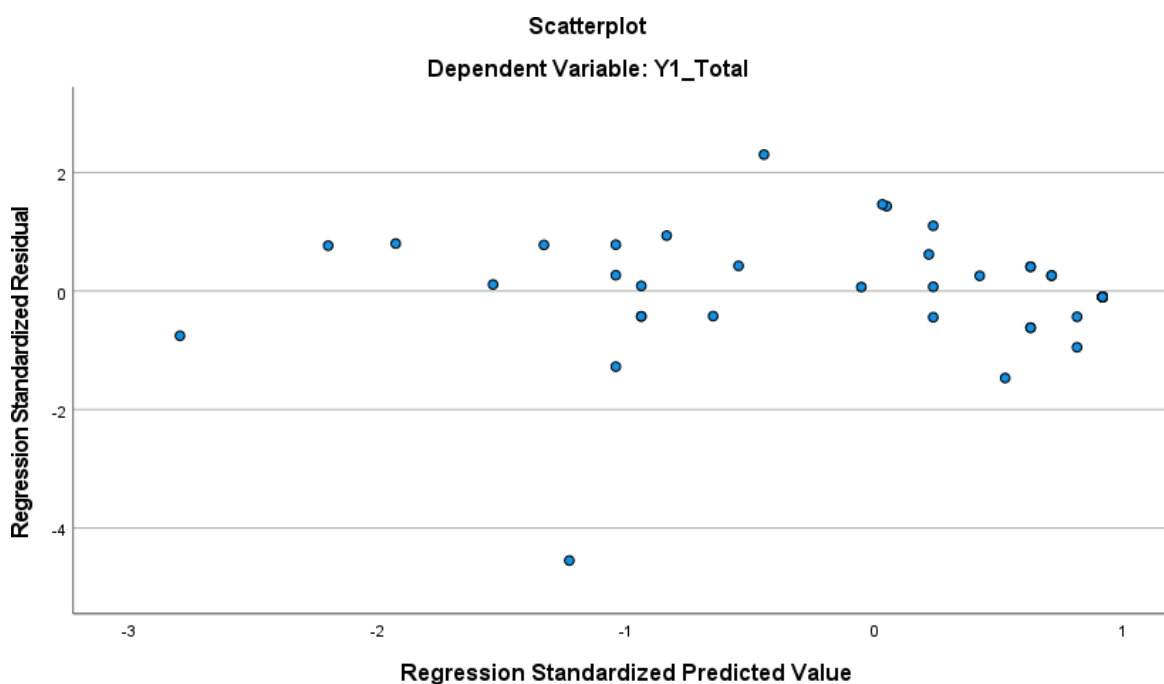


Figure 1. Scatterplot for regression

Hypothesis Testing and Dominance

Simultaneous testing (F-test) yielded a value of 70.125 with a significance of $p < 0.001$, confirming that Interpersonal and Professional Leadership collectively impact Human Development. Partial testing (t-test) revealed a significant positive effect for Interpersonal Leadership ($t = 4.404$, $p < 0.001$). In contrast, Professional Leadership did not show a statistically significant partial effect ($t = 1.350$, $p = 0.184$). Standardized Beta values further confirm the dominance of Interpersonal Leadership (0.684) over

Professional Leadership (0.210). These findings suggest that student organization members are more sensitive to relational experiences, making the interpersonal approach the primary catalyst for human development in DIGNITY. Table 3 shows the ANOVA output for this study.

Table 3. ANOVA output

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10,807	2	5,404	70,125	<,001 ^b
	Residual	3,313	43	,077		
	Total	14,121	45			

a. Dependent Variable: C_total

b. Predictors: (Constant), B_total, A_total

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	,482	,349		1,382	,174					
	A_total	,709	,161	,684	4,404	<,001	,869	,557	,325	,226	4,427
	B_total	,200	,148	,210	1,350	,184	,812	,202	,100	,226	4,427

a. Dependent Variable: C_total

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research instrument has demonstrated high feasibility for analysis, as all items effectively represent the intended theoretical construct. Furthermore, the high internal consistency among the indicators confirms that the instrument provides a stable and reliable measurement of leadership perceptions within the DIGNITY Student Association. These findings indicate that the tools developed based on the Leaders Curriculum are substantively relevant to the actual organizational dynamics and member experiences. In the context of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), these results emphasize that modern vocational education must expand beyond pure technical proficiency to encompass robust soft skills and human resource development (Atuahene et al., 2024). By demonstrating that interpersonal leadership directly enhances human development within a digital business student body, this study provides an empirical framework for TVET institutions to integrate structured emotional intelligence and relational mentorship into their training curricula (Iqbal and Ahmad, 2021). Consequently, utilizing student associations as empirical learning laboratories can successfully bridge the gap between abstract leadership values and the practical, real-world professional competencies demanded by modern industries (Sumague, 2023).

Variable Tendencies in Leadership and Human Development

Descriptive statistics reveal a very high tendency across all research variables, suggesting that staff members perceive both leadership practices and their own development as exceptionally positive. Among the measured dimensions, Human Development emerged as the most prominent, characterized by profound gains in mutual trust, psychological safety, and a sense of belonging. Furthermore, the

slightly higher score for Interpersonal Leadership compared to Professional Leadership suggests that members are more sensitive to relational qualities than to administrative coordination.

The Influence of Interpersonal and Professional Leadership on Human Development

Regression analysis confirmed that Interpersonal Leadership and Professional Leadership collectively act as a significant driver of human development, accounting for 76.5% of its variance. However, partial hypothesis testing reveals that only Interpersonal Leadership serves as a significant predictor, as professional structures alone do not directly determine growth without a strong relational foundation. This implies that leadership in DIGNITY is experienced as a supportive process that facilitates member growth rather than a purely formal direction.

The Dominance of Interpersonal Leadership

Interpersonal Leadership is the most dominant factor in fostering growth, as student members respond more effectively to empathy and character understanding than to structural instructions (Sumague., 2023). It is the most dominant factor in fostering growth, as student members respond more effectively to empathy and character understanding than to structural instructions. This reinforces the notion that effective leadership requires individuals who can build meaningful and supportive relationships rather than focusing solely on administrative discipline.

Practical Implications for Leadership Development

The findings suggest a strategic shift from purely administrative tasks to empathetic relationship building within organizational development. Consequently, leadership training should prioritize emotional intelligence alongside technical skills to optimize member growth in alignment with the spirit of the Leaders Curriculum.

Consequently, leadership training should prioritize emotional intelligence (EI) alongside technical skills. Research indicates that leaders with high EI are better equipped to foster psychological safety, which is a primary driver of team innovation and performance (Boyatzis et al., 2021). Furthermore, balancing these "soft" competencies with "hard" skills is crucial, as the ability to manage social dynamics often predicts long-term organizational success more accurately than technical proficiency alone. By adopting this dual focus, organizations can optimize member growth and collective efficacy in alignment with the spirit of the Leaders Curriculum, ultimately creating a more resilient and human-centric institutional culture.

CONCLUSIONS

This research confirms that leadership effectiveness within the DIGNITY Student Association is a vital driver of human development, with leadership styles collectively accounting for a substantial 76.5% of member growth outcomes. The primary finding highlights that while both interpersonal and professional leadership contribute to the organizational climate, the interpersonal dimension is the dominant predictor of a member's sense of belonging and psychological safety. This suggests that in a student-led environment, empathy and character understanding are more influential than purely structural or administrative coordination.

The main advantage of this study is the empirical validation of the "Leaders Curriculum" framework. It proves that the framework is not merely theoretical but has been successfully standardized and implemented across multiple departments, resulting in exceptionally high levels of trust and mutual appreciation. Practically, these findings serve as a strategic roadmap for DIGNITY to institutionalize emotional intelligence (EQ) and mentorship as core competencies for all future Heads of Departments. This research can be applied as a benchmark for other student organizations looking to transition from task-oriented management to human-centric leadership models.

Crucially, this study offers a significant contribution to the field of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). It demonstrates how student-led associations can function as empirical learning laboratories to foster 21st-century workforce readiness. While traditional TVET frameworks heavily prioritize technical proficiency, this paper provides a scalable model showing that structured, non-

formal student programs can systematically develop essential soft skills such as relational communication, empathy, and adaptive leadership. By bridging the gap between theoretical human development and operational management, this study outlines practical approaches for vocational institutions to integrate interpersonal competencies into their training curricula, ultimately meeting the holistic professional standards demanded by modern industries.

Despite its significant findings, this study has limitations. The research was conducted using a cross-sectional design and focused on a relatively small sample size within a single organization, which may limit the generalizability of the results to different organizational cultures. Furthermore, the quantitative nature of the study may not fully capture the nuanced, lived experiences of the members. Future work should aim to expand the population to other student associations across different universities to test the broader applicability of the Leaders Curriculum. Additionally, incorporating qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews or focus group discussions, would provide a more granular understanding of how specific empathetic behaviors translate into long-term personal transformation for members.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

Muhammad Naufal Rizqi Auliya: Conceptualization, Methodology, Project administration. **Hasna Haniyah:** Data analysis, SPSS, Validation. **Naomi Nakhwah Kamila:** Investigation, Resources. **Rehabula Lubna Zulfa 'Azizah:** Investigation, Resources. **Muhammad Dzikri Ar-Ridlo:** Supervision, Validation, Writing- Reviewing and Editing. **Btari Mariska Purwaamijaya:** Supervision, Validation, Conceptualization, Writing- Reviewing and Editing.

AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIALS

Data available on request from the authors.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI

The author or authors of this work employed Gemini to improve the writing's clarity. Following the use of the tool, the author or authors took full responsibility for the publication's content and evaluated and edited it as necessary.

ETHIC STATEMENTS

The authors declare that this study involved human subjects participating on a strictly voluntary basis, with informed consent obtained from all respondents prior to data collection. Because the research was conducted as an official internal departmental work program within a student association, formal institutional bioethics committee approval was not required. However, internal organizational clearance

and full approval to utilize the collected data for academic publication were granted by the President of DIGNITY (2024–2025), the Vice President of DIGNITY (2024–2025), and the Head of the Strategy & Succession Development (SSD) Department (2024).

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