

The Leadership Performance of Social Workers in Human Services Organizations: Competency Analysis of the Head of the Research and Program Development (RPD) Department of Rumah Zakat Bandung

^a Tahrizi Fathul Aliim; ^b Soni Akhmad Nulhaqim; ^c Rudi Saprudin Darwis

^a Postgraduate Program, Padjadjaran University, Bandung, Jawa Barat, Indonesia; ^b Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Padjadjaran University, Bandung, Jawa Barat, Indonesia; ^c Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Padjadjaran University, Bandung, Jawa Barat, Indonesia

ABSTRAK

Kepemimpinan dalam organisasi layanan manusia, seperti Rumah Zakat Bandung, berperan krusial dalam efektivitas dan keberlanjutan program. Kepemimpinan efektif mencakup kemampuan memotivasi tim, mengelola sumber daya, serta beradaptasi dengan dinamika sosial dan ekonomi yang terus berubah. Penelitian ini, menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus, mengeksplorasi peran Kepala Departemen Research and Program Development (RPD) dalam menciptakan lingkungan kerja yang positif dan memberdayakan anggota tim sebagai pelaksana utama program. Melalui kerangka teori kepemimpinan (Healy, Covey, Senge, dan Skidmore), temuan menunjukkan bahwa sikap positif pemimpin dan penghargaan terhadap kontribusi tim meningkatkan motivasi, keterlibatan, dan komitmen anggota terhadap misi organisasi. Hal ini berdampak pada kinerja individu dan tim, serta kualitas layanan bagi masyarakat. Dengan kolaborasi yang erat, komunikasi efektif, dan pengembangan kapasitas berkelanjutan, Kepala Departemen RPD memastikan Rumah Zakat Bandung tetap adaptif dan efisien dalam memenuhi kebutuhan masyarakat sekaligus mempertahankan reputasinya sebagai lembaga pelayanan manusia profesional dan terpercaya.

ABSTRACT

Leadership in human services organizations, such as Rumah Zakat Bandung, plays a crucial role in ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of programs. Effective leadership includes the ability to motivate teams, manage resources, and adapt to ever-changing social and economic dynamics. This study, employing a qualitative approach with a case study design, explores the role of the Head of the Research and Program Development (RPD) Department in fostering a positive work environment and empowering team members as the primary implementers of programs. Using leadership frameworks (Healy, Covey, Senge, and Skidmore), the findings reveal that a leader's positive attitude and recognition of team contributions enhance motivation, engagement, and commitment to the organization's mission. This results in improved individual and team performance, as well as better service quality for the community. Through close collaboration, effective communication, and ongoing capacity development, the Head of the RPD Department ensures that Rumah Zakat Bandung remains adaptive and efficient in addressing community needs while maintaining its reputation as a professional and trusted human services organization.

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INTRODUCTION

This study examines leadership performance in human service organizations, a topic that remains underexplored in the context of public administration. Organizations such as Rumah Zakat, despite operating in the non-governmental sector, play a vital role in addressing societal needs, often in areas traditionally under governmental responsibility. By focusing on the competencies of department heads in such organizations, this research broadens the

understanding of how non-governmental entities can implement public management principles to enhance social service delivery.

The study highlights the application of competency-based approaches to leadership within public or semi-public organizations. This analysis offers new insights into public administration, particularly emphasizing the importance of developing specific competencies to ensure the success of programs designed to serve the community. Using Rumah Zakat Bandung as a case study, the research contributes to enriching the local context within public administration discourse, especially in Indonesia. This contribution is significant, given that much of the public administration literature is disproportionately centered on the experiences of developed countries, often overlooking the unique challenges and opportunities present in developing nations like Indonesia.

Leadership in human service organizations occupies a vital position, particularly within institutions operating in the human services sector, such as Rumah Zakat in Bandung. The head of the Research and Program Development (RPD) department is expected not only to possess managerial skills but also to demonstrate the ability to build strong interpersonal relationships and a deep understanding of human services dynamics (Nurwahyuliningsih & Nulhaqim, 2021). In essence, effective leadership in this context requires integrating various complementary theories and competencies (Haifa & Huraerah, 2024). However, challenges persist in understanding how leaders can create a positive work environment, especially within the context of human service organizations like Rumah Zakat Bandung.

Leadership is essential in determining the effectiveness and sustainability of programs offered by human service organizations (Muslim, 2024; Nurwahyuliningsih et al., 2022). Effective leadership includes the ability to motivate and inspire team members, manage resources efficiently, and adapt to changes in the social and economic environment (Vipraprastha & Bagus, 2022). At Rumah Zakat Bandung, leadership responsibilities extend beyond administrative tasks to encompass capacity-building efforts for social workers, who act as initiators in implementing social programs. These social workers are required to develop competencies such as effective communication, empathy, and a comprehensive understanding of social issues faced by the community (Koputri et al., 2023). Despite these efforts, there remain challenges in fostering transformative leadership practices that address organizational adaptability and responsiveness to socio-economic changes. Organizational transformation is a dynamic process involving changes in structures and processes to enhance performance by adapting to developments in the organizational environment (Puspita et al., 2023). In the case of Rumah Zakat Bandung, this transformation entails not only restructuring the organization but also enhancing the capacities of social workers to implement programs that effectively respond to evolving societal and economic demands. Nonetheless, how these transformative strategies are integrated into leadership practices warrants further exploration.

In an era characterized by increasing complexity, human service organizations play a critical role in addressing various social issues. Rumah Zakat, one of Indonesia's leading non-profit organizations, focuses on poverty alleviation and community empowerment (Aliim et al., 2023). Within this framework, the leadership role of the head of the RPD department becomes pivotal. An effective leader must not only manage resources but also inspire and motivate their team to achieve shared goals. Furthermore, the challenges posed by globalization and rapid technological advancements necessitate that leaders identify emerging trends and social issues while developing strategies responsive to community needs (Koputri et al., 2023). Visionary and innovative leadership is thus essential for creating a supportive work environment that fosters individual growth, enhances team loyalty, and improves job satisfaction (Alia et al., 2023).

The leadership theory in the area of social services put forward by Healy (2022) emphasizes the significance of leaders possessing extensive knowledge while fostering an inclusive environment that is responsive to community needs. In the context of Rumah Zakat, the head of the RPD department must exhibit a clear vision and adaptive strategies to address challenges related to social injustice and poverty. Healy further underscores the importance of collaboration with various stakeholders, including government bodies, communities, and the private sector, to develop impactful programs. Yet, the mechanisms by which these collaborative efforts translate into effective program implementation require deeper examination.

Furthermore, interpersonal leadership described by Covey (2020) stated the importance of communication skills and empathy in building strong team relationships. For organizations in the social services sector, the head of the RPD department must be attuned to the needs of both team members and the communities they serve. Covey's emphasis on active listening and trust-building underscores the foundational elements of effective collaboration. However, exploring how these interpersonal strategies influence team dynamics and program success remains an important area of study.

Managerial leadership proposed by Senge (2006) also introduces the need for systemic thinking the ability to view the organization holistically and understand the interplay between its various components. For Rumah Zakat, this involves analyzing factors such as resource allocation, policy frameworks, and community requirements to formulate targeted and sustainable strategies. While Senge's approach provides a robust framework for understanding organizational operations, investigating its practical application within the RPD department's leadership practices could yield valuable insights.

These three theories are interrelated with the leadership competency dimensions described by Skidmore (1995). Skidmore identified several competency dimensions, particularly knowledge, attitudes, and actions required for effective leadership, including the ability to adapt, motivate teams, and understand social and cultural contexts. In this analysis, the author will dig deeper into how the Head of the RPD Department at Rumah Zakat Bandung applies these leadership competencies in daily practice. Through this comprehensive analytical approach, it is expected that it can be revealed how aspects of leadership based on these theories contribute to leadership effectiveness at Rumah Zakat. This research will also explore how Skidmore's leadership dimensions manifest in the daily activities of the RPD department head, providing recommendations for leadership development in similar human service organizations. By identifying strategies that enhance leadership effectiveness, this study seeks to address the complexities and challenges faced by leaders in the human services sector, ultimately aiming to amplify the impact of organizational programs in meeting community needs.

By understanding the role and competencies of the RPD Department Head, we can ultimately provide useful recommendations for leadership development in other human service organizations, as well as increase the impact of the programs implemented in meeting community needs. The main focus will be given to how the Head of the RPD Department integrates leadership principles in the fields of social services, interpersonal leadership, and managerial leadership in carrying out his duties, as well as how Skidmore's leadership competency dimensions are implemented to achieve organizational goals. In this way, it is hoped that a deeper understanding can be built regarding the complexities and challenges faced by leaders in the field of social services, as well as strategies that can be implemented to increase leadership effectiveness in the future.

Literature Review

This article discusses the crucial role of leadership in social service organizations, with a particular focus on Rumah Zakat Bandung and the position of Head of the Research and Program Development (RPD) Department. It highlights that leaders with a positive attitude, who recognize team contributions and communicate effectively, can significantly enhance team motivation, commitment, and performance. Such leadership leads to improved team performance, ultimately benefiting the quality of services provided to the community. Effective leadership in the RPD Department enables Rumah Zakat Bandung to adapt efficiently to growing social and economic challenges while maintaining its reputation as a professional and trustworthy provider of social services.

Recent studies have explored themes related to leadership in human service organizations and community empowerment programs. For instance, Aliim et al. (2023) examined the competencies of social workers as leaders at Rumah Zakat Bandung using Skidmore's leadership theory. Their qualitative descriptive study evaluated the extent to which leaders meet specific leadership criteria, emphasizing knowledge, attitudes, and actions.

The theoretical framework of this study integrates insights from Healy (2022), Covey (2020), Senge (2006), and Skidmore (1995), contextualizing their relevance to leadership practices in social service organizations. Healy's (2022) perspective on social work theories emphasizes the creation of frameworks that address the complexities of practice within human services, aligning with the multidimensional leadership role required in the RPD Department. Covey's (2020) concept of interpersonal leadership highlights the importance of building trust and fostering collaboration among team members, which directly supports team motivation and performance. Senge's (2006) introduces managerial leadership as a dynamic process of creating a learning organization, enabling leaders to adapt to evolving challenges while promoting innovation and efficiency.

Skidmore's (1995) leadership theory focuses on the essential competencies knowledge, attitudes, and actions necessary for social administrators to lead effectively. Each of these theories provides a nuanced lens to analyze the leadership approaches employed in the RPD Department at Rumah Zakat Bandung.

Overall, this literature review confirmed that effective leadership is a major factor in the success of human service organizations such as Rumah Zakat. Social workers who lead these organizations need to have various competencies, including the ability to make decisions, clear communication, and strong leadership, to be able to manage the institution well and provide quality services to people in need.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employed a qualitative approach with a case study design, chosen to gain a comprehensive understanding of the role of leadership in developing the competencies of social workers at Rumah Zakat Bandung. By utilizing case studies, the researcher aimed to explore the dynamics of interactions between leaders and their teams, as well as the processes within the organization that contribute to competency development. The research was conducted at Rumah Zakat Bandung, a social institution focused on community empowerment through the management of zakat, infaq, and alms. This location was selected due to the organization's relevance in the research context and the active social programs it implements.

The research subjects consisted of the Head of HRD, the Head of the Empowerment Department, the Head of the Program Data Optimization Department, the Head of the RPD Department, and two staff members from the RPD Department. These participants were chosen as key informants because of their direct involvement in leadership and competency development processes at Rumah Zakat. Data was collected using several methods, primarily through in-depth interviews employing a semi-structured interview technique. The interviews were conducted with both the leaders and their teams to explore their views on leadership, the challenges they face, and their experiences in developing competencies. All interviews were recorded, and the transcripts were analyzed to identify the main themes related to leadership and competency development. This interview will be recorded and the transcript will be analyzed to identify the main themes (Sugiyono, 2020).

Additionally, a literature study was conducted as an essential component of the research. This stage involved collecting and analyzing relevant information from a variety of written sources, including books, journals, articles, reports, and other documents that provide insight into the research topic. The literature study helped frame the context and theoretical underpinnings of the issue being investigated, as well as identify gaps in the existing research. Document analysis was also conducted, focusing on organizational materials such as annual reports, training documents, and policies related to leadership and competency development. These documents provided additional context regarding the strategies implemented by the leadership at Rumah Zakat Bandung. The data analysis process involved coding and thematic analysis of interview transcripts and documents, following standard qualitative analysis procedures. The analysis was conducted manually, with an emphasis on identifying recurring themes related to leadership practices and competency development.

This research used in-depth interviews with several research informants. Informants are research subjects who understand information to explain or describe the research object. In this research, subject selection was determined by purposive sampling. The following are research subjects determined purposively with the following criteria:

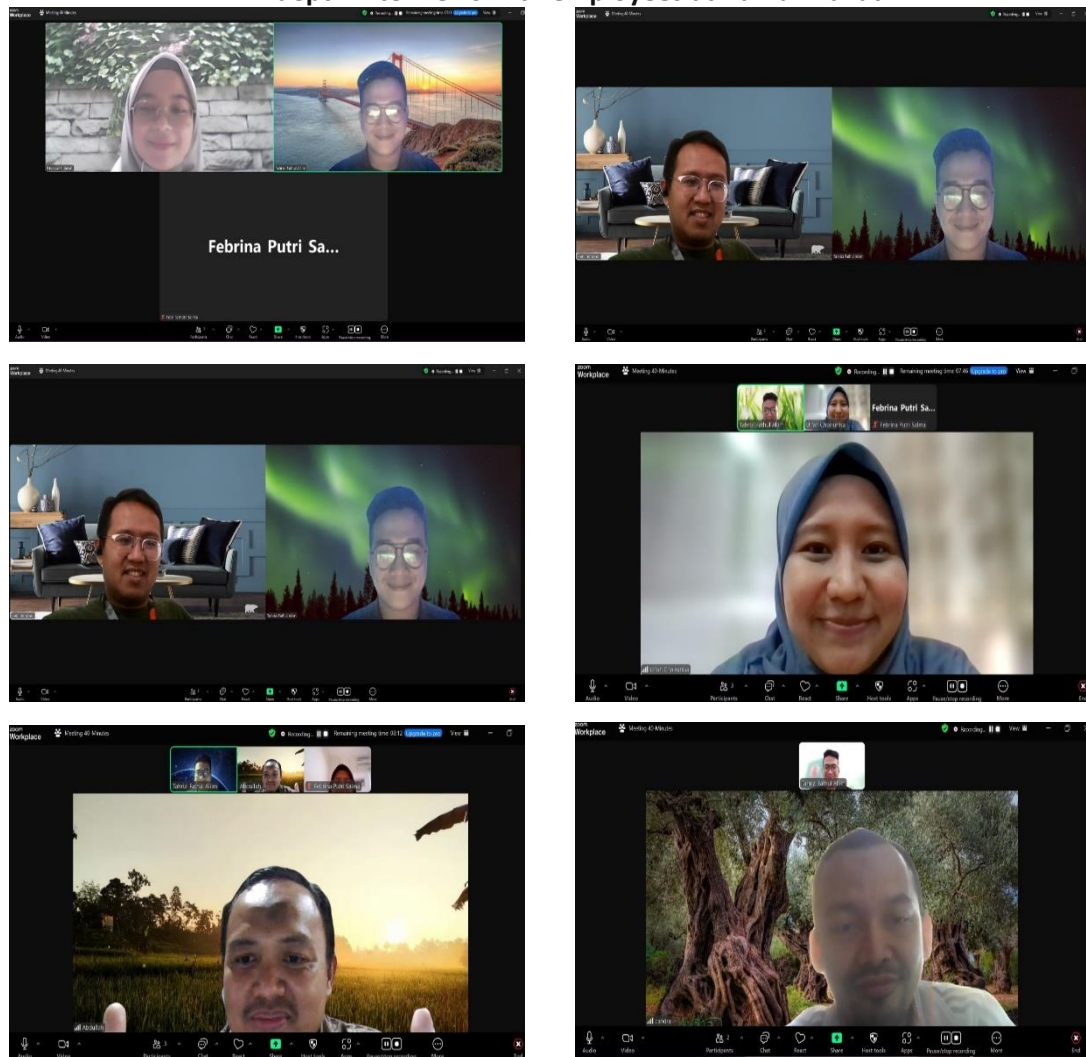
Table 1.
Research Participants (agents)

No.	Agent	Age	Gender	Position
1.	NH	25	Female	Staff of RPD Departement
2.	AR	30	Male	Head of RPD Departement
3.	HI	37	Male	Head of HRD Departement
4.	UC	27	Female	Staff of RPD Departement
5.	AD	40	Male	Head of Empowerment Department
6.	CJ	40	Male	Head of Program Data Optimation Departement

Source: Research, 2024

The table above, which is Table 1, provides an overview of the research informants selected purposively based on the criteria outlined. To further validate the data collection process, this study also includes documentation in the form of photographs taken during the interviews:

Figure 1.
In-depth Interviews with employees at Rumah Zakat



Source: Research, 2024

These images capture key moments of interaction between the researcher and the informants, as shown in Figure 1. The documentation serves as visual evidence, enhancing the transparency and credibility of the research. Each image, reflects the diversity of informants, their engagement in the interview process, and the authenticity of the fieldwork setting, emphasizing the methodological rigor employed in this study.

The use of in-depth interviews provided a qualitative dimension to this research, allowing for a deeper understanding of interpersonal dynamics and leadership effectiveness within the RPD department. This methodological approach purposed to explore the personal experiences and observations of individuals who interact directly with and feel the impact of leadership practices in the department.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Competence of the Head of the RPD Department in Leadership in the Field of Social Services

In leadership in the field of social services, Healy (2022) emphasizes the importance of creating an inclusive and responsive environment. Within the context of Rumah Zakat, the Head of the RPD Department is expected to possess a clear vision and the ability to accurately identify and respond to community needs. This expectation was clearly supported by empirical data collected from interviews with several informants. The findings revealed that the Head of the RPD Department actively involved the community in the program planning phase by collecting feedback and ensuring that interventions were relevant and targeted. This process directly aligns with Healy's theory, which highlights the critical need for collaboration with various stakeholders, including local communities, to design impactful programs. Specifically, the data collected during interviews indicated that the Head of the RPD Department regularly held focus groups and community consultations to refine program objectives, thereby making sure that the program's initiatives were aligned with the community's actual needs and concerns.

In addition to fostering collaboration, the Head of the RPD Department demonstrated a capacity to integrate a comprehensive social perspective in decision-making processes. As evidenced by the interviews, when designing economic empowerment programs, the RPD Department Head took into account not only economic factors but also cultural and social elements that could significantly impact the program's success. One such example was seen in a recent empowerment initiative where cultural sensitivity and local customs were incorporated into training materials and approaches. This approach resonates with Skidmore's (1995) notion that leadership in social services requires leaders to have a broad understanding of social issues, including the social, cultural, and economic contexts that influence the community. The empirical evidence gathered through interviews highlighted the department's capacity to tailor programs by considering these broader factors, thereby improving the likelihood of program effectiveness.

A deep knowledge of social service principles, organizational policies, and community needs is another important competency of the Head of the RPD Department. Data from interviews showed that the department head not only possessed a strong theoretical understanding but also demonstrated practical knowledge in applying this knowledge to real-life scenarios. For example, when implementing a vocational training program, the department head utilized evidence-based approaches by integrating the latest trends in social service practices with the current socio-economic conditions of the community. This evidence-based approach was highlighted by several informants, who noted that the Head of the RPD Department frequently consulted both academic literature and field reports to design interventions that were well-informed and grounded in practical realities. This approach follows Healy's assertion that leaders must combine theoretical and practical knowledge to empower and inspire their teams, which was a theme consistently supported in the interviews with staff members from the RPD department.

Further emphasizing the importance of knowledge integration, the Head of the RPD Department also displayed a commitment to fostering a collaborative and informed decision-making environment within the team. Interviews revealed that the RPD Department Head frequently facilitated team discussions around relevant theories, which encouraged knowledge sharing and collaboration among team members. By engaging with the team in this manner, the department head not only enriched the planning process but also built a strong sense of ownership and commitment among staff members. This is consistent with Skidmore's (1995) perspective that

effective leadership in social services requires the integration of collective knowledge to produce responsive policies and practices.

Additionally, the Head of the RPD Department exhibited an adaptive leadership style that responded to changing community demands. As revealed by the data, the Head of the RPD Department regularly engaged in monitoring and evaluation of ongoing programs, ensuring that any necessary adjustments could be made promptly. For example, during the implementation of a disaster relief program, the department head responded to feedback from beneficiaries and local authorities, making real-time adjustments to the program to improve service delivery. This proactive attitude toward program management, as reported by several informants, contributed significantly to the continual improvement of services, and reflected a deep understanding of the need for flexibility and responsiveness in social service leadership. This practice of ongoing evaluation and feedback loops, as outlined by Salju (2023), is a key characteristic of effective leadership in social services.

In terms of policy, the Head of the RPD Department displayed a thorough understanding of the relevant regulations and ethical standards that govern social service programs. The data showed that the RPD Department Head consistently ensured that programs were not only designed with community needs in mind but also aligned with applicable government policies and ethical guidelines. For instance, the department head integrated national development goals into program frameworks, ensuring that every initiative was in line with the broader socio-economic strategies established by government authorities. This approach was corroborated by informants who noted that the department head's familiarity with both local and national policies greatly contributed to the legitimacy and credibility of Rumah Zakat's programs.

The involvement of the team in this policy-driven planning process further enhanced the relevance and effectiveness of programs. As indicated by the interviewees, the Head of the RPD Department ensured that team members were well-versed in policy implications, which allowed for innovative solutions that adhered to established guidelines. This proactive approach to incorporating policies into program development not only ensured compliance but also bolstered the team's confidence in the feasibility of the program. Moreover, the department's adherence to ethical standards helped enhance Rumah Zakat's credibility among stakeholders, including the community and government. This was evident from the trust expressed by the local authorities and community leaders, who praised Rumah Zakat's transparent and ethical approach to social service delivery.

In the light of the findings, the leadership of the Head of the RPD Department at Rumah Zakat reflects a strong integration of theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and an in-depth understanding of policies and ethical standards. This combination of knowledge and practice is crucial for the development of effective and sustainable social service programs. The empirical data collected from the interviews demonstrated that the department head's leadership competencies were instrumental in shaping programs that were not only responsive to the immediate needs of the community but also sustainable in the long term. Therefore, the integration of both knowledge and practical experience in leadership is a key factor in achieving organizational goals and improving the welfare of society, as demonstrated by the successful initiatives led by the Head of the RPD Department.

Head of RPD Department Competence in Interpersonal Leadership

In exploring interpersonal leadership, Covey (2020) emphasizes the role of communication attitudes in reflecting leadership qualities. This analysis demonstrates that the Head of the RPD Department at Rumah Zakat exhibits strong interpersonal leadership through effective

communication, trust-building, and active participation. Interviews with several informants provided insights into how the Head of the RPD Department prioritizes open and transparent communication with the team. A specific example highlighted by the respondents was the formulation of a new program. The Head of the RPD Department confirmed that he encourages an open discussion, allowing each team member to express their opinions and ideas. This practice fosters a sense of ownership and motivates the team to engage more deeply in the program's implementation. As Covey (2020) notes, leaders who actively listen and respect others' input contribute to a more collaborative and productive work environment. The empirical data from interviews show that the Head of the RPD Department's communication strategy significantly enhances the team's trust and commitment, as observed in their willingness to contribute ideas freely.

Furthermore, the Head of the RPD Department demonstrated strong conflict management skills in situations where differing opinions arose among team members. In one instance, team members had contrasting views on the best approach to take for a project, but the Head of the RPD Department effectively facilitated a constructive discussion that led to a consensus. This approach exemplifies his interpersonal competence and understanding of team dynamics. The research findings corroborate Skidmore's (1995) framework, which emphasizes that a leader's ability to motivate and manage interpersonal relationships is crucial in driving team success. Data gathered from interviews revealed that such conflict-resolution practices help maintain a positive atmosphere and ensure the smooth execution of projects.

Leadership competency is not only shaped by knowledge and skills but also by the leader's attitude. Sinaga et al. (2023) argue that a leader's attitude, which reflects their values and beliefs, directly influences their approach to decision-making, team interactions, and program implementation. In the case of the RPD Department Head, his empathetic leadership style marked by a deep understanding of team members' perspectives was frequently cited in interviews as a key factor in promoting a supportive and inclusive work environment. By showing empathy, the RPD Department Head helps to meet both the emotional and professional needs of his team. This, in turn, contributes to a climate of mutual respect and increases team motivation and engagement. The empirical evidence from the interviews supports this claim, as informants consistently noted the Head's ability to listen and empathize with their challenges, fostering a sense of belonging and commitment to the organization's goals.

The attitude of the Head of the RPD Department also had a significant impact on the organizational climate. Positive attitudes towards work and a commitment to the organization's mission were frequently mentioned by interviewees as factors that influenced team morale. Leaders who display empathy, support, and recognition of their team's contributions create an environment where individuals feel valued, leading to higher performance. According to Skidmore (1995), this supportive leadership approach is crucial for achieving the desired outcomes in human services organizations. The data gathered in this study confirmed that the RPD Department Head's recognition of individual contributions plays a key role in maintaining high levels of motivation among team members. As one interview stated, "When our efforts are acknowledged, we feel more committed and motivated to work toward the shared goals of the organization."

The data also revealed a clear connection between the interpersonal leadership of the RPD Department Head and the development of strong, positive relationships within the team. The Head's respect for each individual and his consistent effort to create a collaborative atmosphere significantly contributed to team cohesion. The Head's leadership approach aligns with Skidmore's (1995) assertion that respect and mutual understanding among team members are

essential for fostering effective teamwork. By consistently valuing input from team members, the RPD Department Head reinforced the idea that every individual plays a critical role in the success of the organization. The empirical data supports this notion, as several informants expressed their increased commitment to the program due to the Head's approach to team collaboration and respect for diverse perspectives.

In terms of inclusive leadership, the Head of the RPD Department demonstrated a commitment to involving the team in decision-making processes, particularly when determining new program ideas. The open and inclusive approach to staff contributions led to a sense of ownership and a greater commitment to the program's success. This aligns with the findings of Andari et al. (2024), who argue that inclusive leadership is crucial for enhancing team motivation and engagement. The data collected from interviews shows that when team members feel their voices are heard, their level of involvement in the process increases. As one informant mentioned, "When we are included in decision-making, we feel more responsible for the outcomes, and this motivates us to work harder."

Inclusive leadership also facilitates organizational learning by creating a safe space for feedback and idea-sharing. In interviews, team members emphasized that the RPD Department Head's leadership style encouraged them to innovate without the fear of making mistakes. This is particularly important in social services, where programs need to adapt to the changing needs of the community. The research findings suggest that the Head's leadership has contributed to the team's ability to stay responsive and adaptive to challenges, reinforcing the importance of continuous learning and improvement in the organization.

Furthermore, the inclusive leadership style of the RPD Department Head has led to improved decision-making quality. By valuing diverse perspectives and encouraging open discussion, the risk of bias in decision-making is minimized. Empirical data from interviews confirms that the inclusion of multiple viewpoints results in more comprehensive and innovative solutions, particularly when addressing community needs. The team highlighted instances where decisions that incorporated input from various members led to more effective and contextually appropriate program strategies.

In the light of the findings, the leadership of the Head of the RPD Department at Rumah Zakat is strongly influenced by his interpersonal leadership qualities, including effective communication, empathy, and inclusive decision-making. These qualities have a significant impact on team cohesion, motivation, and organizational performance. The findings of this study, supported by the data from interviews, demonstrate the critical role that interpersonal leadership plays in fostering a positive organizational climate and achieving the goals of the RPD Department. Moving forward, it is essential to further explore the ways in which these interpersonal aspects of leadership can be leveraged to enhance the overall effectiveness of the organization.

Competence of RPD Department Heads in Managerial Leadership

In managerial leadership, Senge (2006) emphasized the necessity for leaders to have systemic thinking and see the organization as a whole. In the case of Rumah Zakat, the Head of the RPD Department exhibited the ability to analyze multiple influencing factors for the success of a program. This holistic approach to leadership goes beyond focusing on short-term outcomes, incorporating a long-term perspective on the impact of each implemented program. The Head of the RPD Department, through careful analysis, uses precise data and information to evaluate the effectiveness and outcomes of the interventions carried out. This evaluation process entails not only gathering feedback from the community but also systematically analyzing data to identify areas for improvement. For instance, in the evaluation of a program designed for a

particular community, empirical data on the beneficiaries' responses and overall impact were collected through surveys and direct feedback from the program participants. This process ensured that the findings were not merely subjective but based on concrete data, enabling the RPD Department Head to refine the strategies in future implementations. By incorporating feedback loops, the Head of the RPD Department can adjust the program's goals and methodology, ensuring it aligns with both the organization's mission and the community's evolving needs.

Moreover, the RPD Department Head strives to foster a learning culture within the organization, actively encouraging team members to enhance their skills and knowledge. This focus on continuous development reflects a managerial leadership competency that prioritizes adaptability and learning. The Head of the RPD Department not only directs but also empowers the team to innovate and find new approaches to social work interventions. In this context, leaders at Rumah Zakat understand that a successful social program requires more than just following established procedures; it involves creating a dynamic space where creativity and learning are encouraged. This is evidenced by specific actions, such as providing regular training sessions based on team feedback and the evolving needs of program beneficiaries. In one particular instance, the department offered training in data-driven decision-making, which was directly aligned with the need for more rigorous analysis in program evaluation. This proactive approach reflects the application of theoretical concepts, such as those proposed by Nugroho et al. (2024) and Edward & Frinaldi (2024), who emphasize the importance of leaders facilitating innovation and continuous feedback in social service contexts. Such an environment not only nurtures professional growth but also fosters a culture of innovation, allowing the team to respond effectively to the unique challenges posed by each program.

The RPD Department Head's leadership extends to the implementation of a structured feedback system that facilitates both individual and team growth. Following the completion of a program, a reflective session is held where team members evaluate their contributions, the strengths they applied, and areas that require improvement. This feedback system, underpinned by empirical data collected throughout the program cycle, enables the department to assess individual performance and identify collective strengths. For example, post-program evaluations revealed that the feedback loop allowed team members to improve their decision-making processes, as it provided clarity on areas where they could make a more substantial impact. By integrating data from these evaluations, the Head of the RPD Department strengthens the feedback system to ensure it contributes to individual development and enhances team cohesion. Furthermore, the incorporation of this data into leadership decisions ensures that the actions taken are continually improved upon. Thus, the constructive feedback mechanism aligns with Senge's (2006) idea of creating an organization that is reflective and responsive to change, ultimately helping to improve the social service outcomes of Rumah Zakat.

The findings suggest that the leadership of the Head of the RPD Department, particularly in terms of managerial leadership, is closely related to Skidmore's (1995) view of leadership competency. Skidmore emphasizes that effective leadership is evaluated based on its success in achieving organizational goals. In this case, managerial leadership in the RPD Department not only involves managing resources but also developing effective strategies and motivating team members to realize the program's potential. One example of the Head of the RPD Department's success in this area is his ability to align the strengths of individual team members with the specific needs of each program. By doing so, the department head optimizes the overall performance and outcome of the program, ensuring that the resources and expertise available are utilized most effectively. The empirical data collected in interviews with team members highlighted that individuals felt more motivated when they were able to contribute based on

their unique strengths. This approach has had a positive effect on team cohesion and performance, as it encourages members to take ownership of their tasks, which is crucial in maintaining high levels of engagement and achieving desired results.

Furthermore, the empirical data reveals that the Head of the RPD Department's approach to leadership by identifying and leveraging the individual strengths of team members also fosters a positive work culture that drives innovation and collaboration. For instance, a recent program on capacity building for underprivileged communities benefited from the RPD Department Head's strategic placement of team members with specific expertise in different stages of the program. The data from the program's progress and outcomes show that this targeted approach resulted in more efficient processes and enhanced innovation in program delivery. These findings are consistent with the leadership theory that emphasizes the importance of empowering team members and allowing them to contribute according to their abilities. As a result, the program achieved its objectives more effectively, demonstrating the positive impact of the RPD Department Head's leadership in fostering a collaborative and innovative environment.

In addition to empowerment, the Head of the RPD Department plays an active role in planning, demonstrating a collaborative and inclusive leadership style. Through direct involvement in planning sessions, the Head ensures that all team members have a voice in the decision-making process. Empirical evidence from internal surveys and team feedback shows that team members value this inclusivity, as it fosters a sense of belonging and ownership over the outcomes. For example, during a recent planning meeting for a new community development program, the department head's inclusion of all team members in brainstorming sessions led to the development of more diverse and practical strategies. This direct involvement also ensures that the final strategies are more attuned to the realities on the ground, as the team's insights and on-the-ground knowledge are incorporated into the plan. This approach aligns with Skidmore's (1995) competency framework, where leadership effectiveness is not merely about overseeing tasks but also about fostering an environment where team members can contribute meaningfully to the strategic direction of the organization.

In the light of the findings, the empirical evidence collected through feedback systems, team evaluations, and program assessments supports the claim that the Head of the RPD Department's leadership is characterized by a combination of managerial expertise, empowerment of team members, and a focus on continuous learning and innovation. These findings underscore the importance of leadership in social organizations, where success is measured not only by achieving program objectives but also by the development of a motivated, collaborative, and innovative team capable of addressing complex social issues. Through these practices, the Head of the RPD Department exemplifies the principles of effective leadership, as discussed by Senge (2006) and Skidmore (1995), and demonstrates how a leader's involvement in both strategic planning and day-to-day operations can significantly impact organizational success.

CONCLUSIONS

Effective leadership in human service organizations, such as Rumah Zakat, plays a critical role in ensuring the sustainability, relevance, and long-term impact of the programs implemented. Competent leaders are required not only to understand and integrate various leadership theories such as those in social, interpersonal, and managerial services but also to apply them effectively in a complex and dynamic work environment. This integration enables leaders to understand the specific needs of the communities served, design solution-oriented programs,

and foster mutually beneficial relationships with teams and beneficiaries. For instance, a leader with strong interpersonal communication skills can increase team motivation and involvement, leading to more effective achievement of program objectives. Meanwhile, strong managerial skills allow leaders to make strategic planning and program implementation more efficient, transparent, and sustainable. By combining different leadership theories into adaptive and applicable competencies, a committed RPD Department Head can maximize the positive impact of each social service initiative, ensuring these programs not only succeed but also provide real, long-term benefits for the community.

Moreover, leaders in the social services sector must continually improve their skills and knowledge through ongoing training and establishing strategic collaborations with various stakeholders. In the face of rapid social development and change, proactive and adaptive leaders can respond to the dynamic and increasingly complex needs of society. Continuous leadership development helps leaders acquire new skills, enhance their understanding of emerging social challenges, and discover innovative solutions that are relevant to current conditions. Expanding networks and collaborating with other organizations also enables leaders at Rumah Zakat and similar institutions to leverage broader resources, share knowledge, and coordinate strategic actions to achieve greater common goals. Through this collaborative approach, human services organizations can become more responsive, flexible, and effective in meeting community needs, thereby contributing to the realization of sustainable and inclusive social development goals.

Despite these findings, this study has several limitations. First, the research primarily focuses on the leadership competencies within Rumah Zakat, which may limit the generalizability of the results to other human service organizations. Future research could broaden the scope to include different organizations in the social services sector to provide a more comprehensive understanding of leadership practices. Additionally, the study mainly highlights leadership theories without exploring how specific cultural or regional factors might influence leadership effectiveness in different contexts. Further investigations could examine these contextual variables to provide more nuanced insights into leadership in human services.

In terms of practical application, it would be valuable to implement the findings of this study in ongoing leadership training programs and organizational development strategies. Future research could focus on developing practical frameworks for leadership development, tailored to address the specific challenges faced by human service organizations in various regions. By doing so, the study's impact can be extended beyond theoretical understanding to tangible improvements in the practice of leadership in social services.

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