Social Science Lens: A World Journal of Human Dynamics and Social Relations
2025, Vol. 6, No.1, 1 – 20 | ISSN Online: 3028-1997 | ISSN Print: 3028-1962
DOI: https://doi.org/10.62718/vmca.ssl-wjhdsr.6.1.SC-0925-006

Burnout, Academic Performance, and Leadership Skills as Predictors of Leadership Performance: Basis for Mental Health Support Program for Student Leaders in HEIs Manila

Article History:
Initial submission: 02 September 2025
First decision: 09 September 2025
Revision received: 30 September 2025
Accepted for publication: 10 October 2025
Online release: 15 October 2025

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Abstract

This study examined burnout, academic performance, and leadership skills as predictors of leadership performance among student leaders in higher education institutions (HEIs) in Manila. The researchers determined which factors most strongly impact leadership performance. One hundred seven (107) student leaders participated in the study, and the following instruments were employed: Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (MBI-GS) to assess burnout, the Leadership Skills Questionnaire (LSQ) to measure leadership skills, and the Student Leadership Behavior Scale (SLBS) to evaluate leadership performance. The student leaders' recent General Weighted Average (GWA) was determined as the academic performance. For the descriptive statistics, Spearman's rho correlation and linear regression analysis were used to determine the relationships and predictive values. The analysis revealed that burnout is manifested infrequently, while academic performance was classified as good. Leadership skills were found to be very high, and leadership performance was correspondingly high. Correlation analysis revealed that burnout and academic performance were not significantly associated with leadership performance. Conversely, leadership skills indicated a strong positive correlation with leadership performance. The regression analysis supported that leadership skills substantially predicted leadership performance. The findings suggest that while burnout and academic performance continue to be elements of the leadership journey, leadership skills are revealed to be the most important determinant of leadership performance. Given the results, HEIs in Manila should adopt comprehensive leadership programs accompanied by mental health support activities to strengthen leadership skills, promote well-being, and uphold good academic performance.

Keywords: burnout, academic performance, leadership skills, leadership performance, student leaders, higher education

INTRODUCTION

For some years, there has been a shift in the tertiary educational landscape requiring student leaders to deal with increased academic and leadership tasks. Leaders now need to reinvent and discover themselves along the process, and as Toker (2022) emphasized, leadership is more of a function than a role. Students engaging in multiple tasks are susceptible to burnout and declining academic performance (Ross, 2021). Due to this, they often multitask and are more overwhelmed than non-leaders; they deal with a heightened risk of stress that can escalate to burnout. The literature shows that burnout is an emerging common phenomenon among students, particularly those handling leadership positions at the tertiary level. Maslach (1982, p. 30) defined burnout as an "emotional exhaustion followed by depersonalization and reduction in personal accomplishment." Schaufeli et al (2002) describes burnout as progressive loss of motivation, depletion of energy, and reduced capacity for action toward others. The literature shows that burnout has affected student

leaders in many ways. This ever-changing and complex world has produced a generation of students who are multi-taskers, leading them to perform numerous tasks inefficiently and overwork (McAlister, 2009). The tendency to multitask and its corresponding negative implications enable burnout to take place.

The study of Pedroso et al. (2023) found that Filipino college student leaders are more susceptible to stress as they fulfill multiple tasks that can feel overwhelming. Additionally, one of the unavoidable parts of becoming a student leader is experiencing difficulties and conflicts, which places them in accumulating stress that leads to burnout (Atienza et al., 2022).

Academic performance and leadership skills are two key aspects that are also imperative to fulfill expected functions successfully. A basic assumption is that one must excel academically as a student leader. However, Huang and Fang (2013) assert that developing skill sets such as time management and coping strategies is far more important than maintaining good grades. Such skills are helpful in the journey of one's leadership and focusing on growth and self-development is crucial (Goleman, 1995; Northouse, 2018). Moreover, an undesirable occurrence is that the difficulties some student leaders' experiences are translated into low academic performance even though they find satisfaction in their leadership roles (Kumaku, 2021).

Studies show that tertiary student leaders face academic and organizational challenges daily that affect their performance and well-being. While burnout, academic performance, and leadership skills have been studied widely as separate variables, there is little understanding of their interrelationship affecting leadership performance. In filling this gap, the present study attempts to investigate the relationship between these factors to understand student leadership better at the tertiary level. Results of the study will become a basis for an evidence-based mental health program for student leaders in HEIs in Manila.

In this study, burnout is conceptualized as a psychological syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach, 1982). Burnout may hinder leadership performance by diminishing motivation, resilience, and organizational commitment, thereby impairing a student leader's ability to sustain effective leadership behaviors (Salmela-Aro & Upadyaya, 2018). Academic performance is defined as the student leader's General Weighted Average (GWA), which serves as the most widely recognized indicator of scholastic achievement in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Philippines. The GWA was selected because it provides a standardized and cumulative measure of student achievement and is often used as a requirement for holding student leadership positions (DepEd, 2019; Huang & Fang, 2013; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

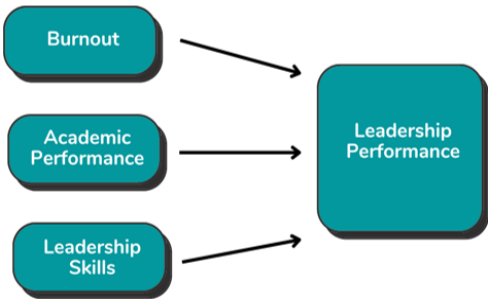

Figure 1
The conceptual framework illustration

While not a direct measure of leadership competence, academic performance reflects discipline, cognitive ability, and time management; skills that are essential for balancing the dual roles of student and leader (Kumaku, 2021). Leadership skills, which encompass technical, human, and conceptual competencies directly shape student leaders' capacity to communicate, problem-solve, and collaborate effectively. These competencies are foundational to driving overall leadership performance (Northouse, 2018). Leadership performance refers to the demonstration of leadership behaviors and competencies that enable student leaders to effectively guide, influence, and achieve objectives within their

organizations. Drawing from Kimura et al. 's (2022) Student Leadership Behavior Scale (SLBS), leadership performance encompasses six key domains: taking initiative and modeling the way, challenging the process, sharing goals, managing goals and tasks, task-oriented support, and people-oriented support. Theoretical understanding of leadership performance emphasizes the translation of leadership knowledge, skills, and interpersonal competencies into observable behaviors that promote both organizational effectiveness and team development. Collectively, burnout, academic performance, and leadership skills provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the predictors of leadership performance and serve as an empirical basis for developing mental health and psychosocial support programs tailored to student leaders in HEIs Manila.

This study employed the operational definitions of the variables to ensure alignment of the data with the study's objectives. Burnout refers to the level of emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced personal accomplishment experienced by student leaders due to academic and leadership demands. It was measured using the Maslach Burnout Inventory–General Survey (MBI-GS) (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Overall scores were calculated to reflect participants' general level of burnout, with higher scores indicating greater burnout.

Academic performance refers to the level of students' achievement in their coursework. In this study, it was measured using participants' recent General Weighted Average (GWA), with higher scores indicating better academic performance.

Leadership skills refer to the technical, human, and conceptual competencies that enable student leaders to perform effectively in organizational roles. These skills were measured using the Leadership Skills Questionnaire (LSQ). Overall scores were calculated to reflect participants' general leadership skill level, with higher scores indicating greater proficiency across all skill domains.

Leadership performance refers to the extent to which student leaders demonstrate effective leadership behaviors in their organizational roles. It was measured using the Student Leadership Behavior Scale (SLBS) (Kimura et al., 2022), which assesses six domains: taking initiative and modeling the way, challenging the process, sharing goals, managing goals and tasks, task-oriented support, and people-oriented support. Overall scores were calculated to represent general leadership performance, with higher scores indicating stronger performance across all domains.

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between burnout, academic performance, and leadership skills as predictors of leadership performance among student leaders in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Manila, with the end goal of designing a mental health program grounded on the study's findings. More specifically, it aims to investigate the following:

1. What are the levels of burnout, academic performance, leadership skills, and leadership performance among student leaders in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Manila?

2. What is the correlation between burnout, academic performance, and leadership skills with leadership performance?

3. What are the predictive effects of burnout, academic performance, and leadership skills on leadership performance?

4. What mental health support program can be proposed based on the findings of the study?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Burnout and Leadership Performance. The stress of daily life that students go through is similar to the workplace stress of workers and can be an all-encompassing part of student

leaders' lives. The implications of stress have been studied over the years indicating the susceptibility of college students to acquire physical and psychological issues when constantly exposed to stressful situations (Andrews, B., & Wilding, J. M. 2004; Eppelmann et al., 2020; and Payne, H., 2022). Stress has a clear role in burnout, especially when it is chronic, and one's coping strategies are not sufficient to deal with stress (Lin & Huang 2014).

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines burnout as a condition recognized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has been inadequately managed and characterized it by "feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion; increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job; and reduced professional efficacy." (World Health Organization, 2019). Likewise, social psychologist and professor Maslach (1982), who extensively studied burnout, defined it as "a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that may occur in individuals doing some type of work." These three dimensions of burnout, as established by Maslach (1982), was translated to student leaders' academic and career performance (May et al., 2015; Salvagioni et al., 2017) since student leaders usually have demanding tasks, pressure to meet standards, and difficulties in handling responsibilities, these result in decreased motivation, impaired cognitive functioning, and disengagement from leadership (Salmela-Aro & Upadyaya, 2019). Interestingly, the study by Gibson et al. (2024) discovered that establishing a personal relationship with God and a sense of accomplishment serve as safety nets to prevent students from experiencing burnout.

Burnout among students is an apparent global problem, especially for students undertaking leadership roles in institutions of higher learning. It has been linked to workplace factors like student persistence and retention, including intention to leave work and lower organizational commitment (Lee and Ashforth, 1996, as cited in Lin and Huang, 2014). Research on burnout among student leaders has revealed its detrimental effects on student leaders. For instance,

Pamungkas and Nurlaili (2021) recognize that as university students perform their roles, their accumulated stress level results in weariness, exhaustion, pessimism, and self-doubt as they perform their day-to-day functions. Furthermore, findings from a study on academic burnout in secondary school students in Kenya show that academic burnout negatively affects academic performance because of negative perceptions of the learning environment, excessive perceived workload, lack of enthusiasm, and lack of a sense of meaningfulness about academic activities (Oyoo et al., 2020). Moreover, according to Salmela-Aro and Upadyaya (2018), student leaders who are compared to employees are more susceptible to higher levels of burnout due to pressure in academic and organizational tasks and the self-expectations and expectations of others to demonstrate excellent performance. A disheartening conclusion that the Generation Z student leaders nowadays deal with more damaging effects of burnout compared to other generations (Ross, 2021).

The study of Pedroso et al. (2023) among Filipino college student leaders found that demographics (e.g., gender, leadership experience) and general weighted average (GWA) have no significant impact with burnout, therefore concluding that burnout is directly connected with leadership demands rather than demographics. Encountering conflicts with their co-leaders and the people they work with puts them at a higher risk of burnout compared to American and Chinese counterparts. Student leaders are almost comparable to managers in a workplace dealing with the demands of job pressure, expectations, and conflict with colleagues, factors that may escalate to burnout. Valuable strategies were offered by McCormack (2014) in minimizing the concerning effects of burnout, he stated that monitoring of job demands, interpersonal connection, clarity, support, and authentic communication can mitigate burnout.

Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping states that people are constantly confronted with evaluating stimuli in their environment. In turn, this evaluation elicits emotions, and when stimuli are considered threatening, challenging, or harmful, the stress experienced activates the coping mechanisms to address the source of stress (Biggs et al., 2017). This model is an important reference point in understanding how student leaders deal with academic pressures, leadership, and social involvement. Moreover, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model by Demerouti and Bakker (2011) explains that burnout is a condition wherein a discrepancy between job demands and resources exists. From a leadership context, when responsibilities are mounting, the tools and resources are insufficient, and the coping mechanisms are low, the leader's performance and well-being are directly affected. This is likely to happen since student leaders deal with workload, pressure, and emotional needs, causing feelings of emptiness and withdrawal (Dlamini, Thaba-Nkadimene & Mthiyane, 2024).

Academic Performance and Leadership. Becoming a student leader is never easy; stressful and demanding situations adversely affect academic performance (Dodge, 1990, as cited in Mulenga et al., 2016). There is an underlying expectation for student leaders to maintain good academic standing while fulfilling their leadership roles; as a result, they carry the heavy burden of accomplishing both roles. Academic performance is assessed by the grade point average (GPA), student output, and engagement, essential in student leadership. Academic performance is one of the predictors of effective leadership performance. It can be gauged by how well student leaders manage their time, cognitive ability, and discipline (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Active engagement in organizational activities hone leaders' competencies. Hunt (2003) states that exposure to leadership responsibilities ignites skills and capacity building among leaders. Since these leadership roles provide a venue for leaders to grow and improve their competencies, a significant improvement in their academic performance has been noted. Similarly, Wekesa and Mbogo (2021) found that student council officers in public schools in Kenya have an improved academic performance as their roles have an impact on their character and attitudes.

In reality, student leaders must learn to manage their academic tasks while fulfilling their leadership responsibilities. However, the lingering effects of pressures in their assumed roles could impact their academic performance, induce stress, and amplify self-doubt (Trockel, Barnes & Egget, 2000). Students who over-commit to their leadership tasks negatively impact their achievement, resulting in academic stress (Misra & McKean, 2000; Credé & Niehorster, 2020). Bellesco et al (2024) found that leadership titles and academic achievement influence student leaders' skills and competencies such as commitment and engagement. Conversely, the research by Kumaku (2021) finds that student leaders gain fulfilling experiences by being in leadership. However, their general academic performance can decline drastically. They are presumed to have failed to build effective mechanisms for balancing leadership responsibilities and academic performance. Student leaders who exhibit flexibility, critical thinking, and management competence tend to be effective (Kuh et al., 2006).

The continuous struggle of many student leaders, including balancing their academic workloads and leadership tasks, leads to below-standard academic performance (Foubert & Urbanski, 2006). Finding a balance between academic and leadership tasks impacts students' performance, critical thinking, and interpersonal relationships (Tinto, 2017). Nevertheless, Kim and Lundberg (2016) states that while leadership roles have clear benefits, they also impose pressure and mismanagement of time and commitment among student leaders. Time constraints could also operate reversely because leadership engagements may further limit time available

for studies, negatively impacting academic performance if not properly managed (Soria & Roholt, 2018).

Academic success is achieved when students strengthen their core skills: critical thinking, time management, foresight, and active engagement (Kuh et al., 2006). In addition, student leaders juggling multiple tasks help develop their ability to adjust their learning styles, be flexible, and bear the academic challenges that come their way (Deng et al., 2022).

Leadership Skills and Performance. Student leadership requires continuous effort and learning. Cherniss (2000) stated that demonstrating intellectual, emotional, and interpersonal skills manifests leadership effectiveness. Being able to guide co-leaders and execute plans entails key leadership skills like flexibility, teamwork, effective communication, and problem-solving (Northouse, 2018).

The Commission on Higher Education (2022) Handbook on Student Affairs and Services mentions that student leaders at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Philippines are key players in fostering institutional growth by actively assisting the administrators in organizing various programs and projects. The literature on leadership is extensive and spans various disciplines (Skalicky et al., 2020). Much of the existing studies on leadership skills development have focused on college students, grounded in the belief that the development of student leadership competencies such as technical, conceptual, and interpersonal skills is both a primary responsibility (Al-Omari, Abu Tineh, & Khasawneh, 2008) and a significant outcome (Crawford, Lewis & Kelder, 2024) of higher education.

With the nature of student leaders' roles, they develop abilities that allow them to be more strategic and insightful as they navigate academic and leadership challenges (Yukl et al., 2013). The more they encounter difficulties and challenges, the more they are inclined to be innovative in problem-solving. Indeed, leadership provides a venue for enhancing skills and collaboration, allowing student leaders to stand out among non-leaders (Komives et al., 2005). Active engagement in student organizations' programs and activities strengthens leadership capabilities, thus preparing student leaders for the necessary tools to sustain leadership roles (Shomotova & Ibrahim, 2024). This is supported by Dunbar et al. (2018), affirming that this perspective of leadership experiences directly impacts the development of crucial skills, allowing student leaders to be employable. Student leadership is a core component in higher education institutions (Skalicky et al., 2020; Shertzer & Schuh, 2004). Initiating programs and activities aligned with holistic development and producing skilled graduates have been the top priority (Uaikhanova et al., 2022).

Leaders can be self-motivated and motivate others as well; as a result, enhanced engagement and improved academic pursuits are achieved (Tortosa-Martínez et al., 2022). Likewise, leadership experiences breed confidence in completing academic goals and performing leadership tasks (Gannouni & Ramboarison-Lalao, 2018). However, this is not always guaranteed since many factors encapsulate leadership roles. Participation and active engagement in various activities result in increased absences and unsatisfactory grades (Almeida, Guisande, & Paisana, 2012). Thus, active participation in several activities does not translate to academic success.

Student leaders exhibiting refined leadership competencies are more engaged with their peers and display improved leadership performance (Kouzes & Posner, 2017), while student leaders who fail to demonstrate core leadership competencies struggle with conflict management, critical thinking, and synergy (Astin, 2014). Evidence backs that leadership abilities strongly forecast performance in many contexts, including student leadership (Komives et al., 2005). Also, experience and training in leadership impact the development of skills and performance in general (Day et al., 2016).

Competencies like communication, flexibility, teamwork, and decision-making enable a leader to manage tasks and influence others (Northouse, 2018). Student leaders who demonstrate excellent communication skills, adaptability, and strategy result in long-term leadership situations and opportunities, while deficiencies in primary leadership skills may impede growth and potential (Eich, 2008). Emotional intelligence, effective communication, flexibility, and conflict management directly impact student leaders' capacity to positively influence others and make sound decisions (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2013). The attainment of such skills is pivotal, but most student leaders have difficulty developing them because of the accumulated stress and massive workload they confront.

Leadership competencies, which include decision-making, communication, flexibility, and emotional intelligence, are primary determinants of leadership performance (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). Moreover, it has been found that student leaders gain more evolved leadership skills than non-leaders because of practical experience with team management, event planning, and conflict resolution (Dugan et al., 2019). These competencies could also have their evolution affected by external factors such as organizational support and mentorship programs (Komives et al., 2005). Leadership performance is linked with developing and using decision-making, communication, problem-solving, and interpersonal relationships. Leadership is getting people to act deliberately toward some common goals. One important facet of leadership is supporting, inspiring, and mentoring associates under pressure (Northhouse, 2018).

In the Philippine context, academically achieving students are often placed in leadership positions, thus making academic excellence equivalent to leadership competencies (David, San Pascual, & Torres, 2019; DepEd, 2019). However, this pattern fails to consider students who may be average academically but equipped with core leadership qualities (Cruz, 2014). To support the holistic development of students, requiring students to join organizations or clubs has been implemented by some HEIs. This move allows them to evaluate students with their academic grades and extracurricular participation. Nevertheless, requiring students to participate in non-academic activities may bring pressure and stress to delivering quality academic work and performing well as a leader. Some students will comply to get higher grades, but others see it as a calling to help others. These different motivational goals may impact the student's level of involvement and satisfaction. Furthermore, juggling these obligations could cause burnout if students feel overburdened by the demands imposed upon them.

Moreover, Langley et al. (2010) assert that school administrators have a central role in fostering and shaping school climate (Hallinger & Heck, 1996, as cited in Daly et al., 2025), which is linked to the implementation and outcomes of mental health support and intervention programs. For some years, mental health programs for student leaders have been focusing on peer mentoring, stress management, and resilience. While these initiatives are helpful, they do not address student leaders' needs and concerns (Conley et al., 2013). Gay and Barth (2024) highlighted that institutions must create a customized program for student leaders to address their unique needs and concerns.

In a rural institution in the Philippines, a mental health symposium enhanced leaders' knowledge of mental health but did not significantly impact the student leaders' development of mental health practices (Villarino & Villarino, 2023). This implies that HEI administrators must intentionally create a sustainable mental health program for student leaders, addressing their unique challenges and concerns and monitoring progress.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design. The use of quantitative correlational research design determined the correlation between burnout, leadership skills,

and academic performance among student leaders at higher education institutions (HEIs) in Manila. The correlational analysis was conducted using Spearman's rho to examine the relationships between burnout, academic performance, leadership skills, and leadership performance. Correlational design is suitable for the study, which explored the degree to which the variables (burnout, academic performance, leadership skills) correlate without manipulating them (Lappe, 2000). This analysis will help identify the variables' strength and direction of associations (Cohen, 1988). Linear regression was utilized to assess the influence of independent variables on a dependent variable; it is vital in analyzing the strength of association between the outcome (dependent variable) and predictor variables (Kamari et al., 2018).

Population and Sampling. A total of 107 student leaders from various private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Manila participated in the study. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 23 years old, with the majority being female. They represented a variety of organizational positions from student governments and recognized student organizations, including president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and committee or project head roles. In terms of leadership experience, participants reported serving in leadership capacities from one year to more than four years, with the majority indicating two to three years of leadership experience. Utilizing Green's (1991) model, a sample of n=107 is sufficient for this study.

Research Instruments. The Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Services (MBI-GS) was developed by Maslach, and its adaptation study was carried out by Schaufeli et al. (2002). MBI-GS is an instrument that measures the impact of work-related burnout among all occupations (in general services) environments and is a globally recognized and extensively utilized instrument for assessing burnout. It is a 22-item used to assess burnout across different types of occupations rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 0 (never) to 6 (every day) (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). The scale comprises three subscales: burnout, depersonalization, and personal achievement. The score for each subscale is obtained by dividing the total score of all items in that subscale by the number of items. The study by Iwanicki & Schwab (1981) supports the reliability in terms of the three-factor structure and internal reliability with Cronbach's alpha ratings of 0.90 for emotional exhaustion, 0.76 for depersonalization, and 0.76 for personal accomplishment. In this study, an overall burnout score was generated to reflect the general level of burnout experienced by participants.

The "Leadership Skills Questionnaire" (Northouse, 2011) measures three broad types of leadership skills: technical, human, and conceptual. It is a self-assessment instrument composed of 18 items that determine the leadership strengths and weaknesses. Each statement is answered on a 5-point Likert scale from not true (1) to very true (5). The technical, human, and conceptual subscales have reported reliabilities of 0.804, 0.794, and 0.752, respectively, indicating acceptable internal consistency for each domain.

In this study, however, the overall leadership skills score was used to reflect general leadership ability rather than separate domain scores. LSQ is extensively used internationally and locally to enhance leadership programs and wellness and has been shown to be reliable in several studies. For instance, LSQ was utilized by Cabuenas and colleagues (Cabuenas et al., 2021) to investigate the role of attributes, skills, and culture on leadership style. In addition, the recent study on social intelligence, intellectual humility, and leadership skills in student political group members by Adnan and Malik (2024) revealed the reliability of Leadership Skills Questionnaire as .84 with reliabilities of subscales administrative skills .61; interpersonal skills .67; and conceptual skill .83.

The "Student Leadership Behavior Scale" (Kimura et al., 2022) is a 30-item questionnaire measuring essential student leadership competencies. The questions are on a Likert-

type scale, with options ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Cronbach's alpha with a consistency coefficient of 0.968 revealed its reliability. Jolly et al. (2024) utilized this instrument to measure the leadership competencies of NCAA American college athletes. It has six (6) leadership subfactors: taking the initiative and modeling the way, challenging the process, sharing goals, managing goals and tasks, task-oriented support, and people-oriented support. While these subfactors capture distinct aspects of leadership behavior, this study utilized an overall leadership performance score rather than separate domain scores. The overall score reflects the general demonstration of leadership behaviors, with higher scores indicating stronger overall leadership performance.

Data Gathering Procedure. The researchers secured the necessary approvals from the appropriate individuals. With proper institutional permission, formal coordination was made with various HEI student affairs offices to identify eligible student leaders based on the established inclusion criteria.

Invitation letters via emails were sent to the head of student affairs via university emails to disseminate the invitation to student leaders. The content of the letter includes the purpose of the study, participant selection criteria, benefits, confidentiality, data privacy, researchers' contact information and informed consent. Dissemination of invitation to participate was done by creating electronic publication materials. Data was collected through an online survey administered via a secure Google Forms platform. Only participants who provide informed consent were granted access to the survey.

After consent was given, participants received a personalized link to the Google Forms survey. The link was sent to the email address they provided. The survey can be accessed through smartphones, tablets, or computers, and no additional software or account is needed. Participants were encouraged to complete the survey at their convenience within a designated three- to four-week period. Participants were instructed to complete them during class breaks for an approximated 10-15 minutes.

The research instruments: Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), Leadership Skills Questionnaire (LSQ), Student Leadership Behavior Scale (SLBS) were compiled into a comprehensive survey Google form along with a demographic profile (age, gender, leadership position, name of institution, and years of leadership experience) and a self-reported academic performance item (GPA). The academic performance of the student leaders who participated in the study was their weighted final grade average for the previous semester of the school year 2024-2025.

RESULTS

Levels of burnout, academic performance, leadership skills, and leadership performance among student leaders in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Manila.

Table 1
Level of Burnout, Academic Performance, Leadership Skills, and Leadership Performance

	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Burnout (using MBI-GS)	2.98	0.62	Occurring but not very frequent
Academic Performance (GPA)	2.83	0.77	Good academic performance
Leadership Skills (using LSQ)	4.23	0.47	Very high leadership skills
Leadership Performance (using SLBS)	4.15	0.52	High leadership performance

As shown in Table 1, the mean burnout score measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (MBI-GS) was 2.98 (SD = 0.62), indicating that participants experienced burnout but not on a frequent basis. This moderate level of burnout suggests that the unique struggles of student leadership, when combined with academic responsibilities, contribute to the emergence of stress and exhaustion. In terms of academic performance, the participants' General Weighted Average (GWA) had a mean score of 2.83 (SD = 0.77), which falls within the "good" category. Leadership skills, as measured by the Leadership Skills Questionnaire (LSQ), showed a high mean score of 4.23 (SD = 0.47), interpreted as "very high leadership skills."

Finally, leadership performance, assessed through the Student Leadership Behavior Scale (SLBS), recorded a mean of 4.15 (SD = 0.52). This suggests that student leaders exhibit commendable leadership performance.

Correlation between burnout, academic performance, and leadership skills with leadership performance.

Table 2
Correlation test among variables

	Spearman's Rho	p-value (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Burnout and Leadership Performance	0.152	0.119	Not significant
Academic Performance and Leadership Performance	0.163	0.094	Not significant
Leadership Skills and Leadership Performance	0.755	0.001	Significant Strong Correlation

Table 2 presents the relationships among burnout, academic performance, leadership skills, and leadership performance using Spearman's rho correlation. The results showed that burnout and leadership performance had a weak and non-significant correlation, ρ = .152, p = .119. This means that although burnout occurs, it does not statistically reduce or influence leadership performance among the respondents. The lack of significant correlation between burnout and leadership performance suggests that student leaders may be able to effectively manage burnout without letting it diminish their leadership behaviors. On the other hand, it is possible that participants tend to endure burnout since they may be hyper focused on fulfilling tasks and achieving goals.

Academic performance and leadership performance also indicated a non-significant correlation, p = .163, p = .094. The weak correlation between academic performance and leadership performance conveys that obtaining high grades does not necessarily equate to excelling in leadership performance. The correlation between leadership skills and leadership performance, p = .755, p = .001 states a significant and strong correlation between the two variables. The more challenging the role gets, the more it helps student leaders in sharpening their skills and performing better. Thus, suggesting that acquiring the necessary leadership skills tends to achieve good leadership performance.

Predictive effects of burnout, academic performance, and leadership skills on leadership performance.

Table 3 illustrates a strong model fit demonstrated by a simple linear regression analysis (R= 0.759), with leadership skills accounting for approximately 57.6% of the variance in the outcome (R^2= 0.576). Leadership skills were identified as a significant predictor (β= 0.835, SE= 0.070, t= 11.94, p <.001), suggesting that the outcome variable increases by approximately 0.835 units for each one-unit addition to leadership skills. The intercept was also statistically significant (β= 0.615, SE= 0.2977, t= 2.07, p= 0.041).

Table 3
Linear Regression for Predictive Relationship

Model Fit Measures

Model	R	R^2
1	0.759	0.576

Model Coefficients- SLBS

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept	0.615	0.2977	2.07	0.041
Leadership Skills	0.835	0.070	11.94	<.001

These results emphasize the significant correlation between higher scores on the outcome variable and higher levels of leadership skills. It reveals that leadership skills are the most essential predictor of leadership performance. Indeed, student leaders who possess the necessary leadership skills end up performing better in their respective leadership roles.

Table 4 outlines a proposed Mental Health Support Program for student leaders in HEIs in Manila, structured into four components: Burnout Alleviation & Self-Care, Leadership Skills Enhancement, Academic Support and Balance, and Peer Support and Mental Health

Awareness. Each component specifies objectives, activities, expected outcomes, session duration, and evaluation methods. The program aims to reduce burnout, strengthen leadership competencies, improve academic performance, and promote mental health awareness and peer support. Effectiveness will be measured through pretest and posttest assessments, surveys, and standardized instruments such as the Maslach Burnout Inventory-GS and the Leadership Skills Questionnaire.

Proposed mental health support program.

and Salvagioni et al. (2017) that leadership roles place leaders at higher risk of burnout. The findings also support the Theory of Stress and Coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), which posits that individuals evaluate environmental stressors and activate coping strategies to manage them. This explains why student leaders experiencing moderate burnout can still maintain and perform adequate performance: they may engage in coping strategies, such as time management and peer support. Maintaining good academic performance through their recent General Weighted Average (GWA) scores falling within

Table 4
Proposed Mental Health Support Program for HEIs Student Leaders in Manila

Program Component	Objectives	Activities	Expected Outcome	Duration	Evaluation Method
Burnout Alleviation & Self-care	Help student leaders manage stress, practice self-care strategies, and prevent burnout	Mindfulness workshops, stress management, and self-care routines	Reduced level of burnout and improved well-being	1 session per week for 1 month	Pretest & Posttest of Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Services (Maslach & Jackson, 1981)
Leadership Skills Enhancement	Strengthen leadership competencies and confidence in decision-making and team management	Leadership development sessions, team-building exercises, mentoring	Improved leadership competencies and collaboration	1-2 sessions per week, 2 hours per session for 1 month	Pretest & Posttest of Leadership Skills Questionnaire (Northouse, 2011)
Academic Support and Balance	Enhance academic performance and teach effective study and time management strategies	Study strategies workshops, peer mentoring, goal-setting activities	Improved academic performance and stress and time management	1 session per week, 1.5 hours for 6 weeks	Pretest & Posttest of academic stress survey and self-reported GWA
Peer Support and Mental Health Awareness	Increase awareness of mental health, promote help-seeking, and strengthen peer networks	Mental health talks, peer facilitation training, counseling awareness campaigns	Increased help-seeking behavior and supportive peer networks	1 session per week, 1 hour per session for 3 weeks	Survey on mental health awareness, coping strategies, and peer support

DISCUSSION

The findings that college student leaders experience moderate levels of burnout imply that, despite the struggles and pressures of being a leader, these concerns happen infrequently but are considered notable. Juggling academic tasks and leadership roles is consistent with the assertion of May et al. (2015)

the "good" category indicates that academic workloads and demands do not necessarily jeopardize their academic standing, suggesting student leaders can execute several tasks efficiently. Inconsistent with the claim of Kumaku (2021) that leadership responsibilities diminish academic performance. It implies that student leaders in HEI in Manila utilize and operate coping mechanisms or have support systems to aid them in their undertakings.

Distinctively, the student leaders' very high leadership skills reflect their strong technical, human, and conceptual competencies, indicating that they can effectively manage tasks and resources and excel in interpersonal communication, collaboration, and strategic thinking. These strengths enable them to navigate complex organizational challenges and make informed decisions that positively impact their organizations. This finding aligns with Kouzes and Posner (2017), who assert that advanced leadership skills are critical for enhancing effectiveness in organizational roles, as they allow leaders to influence, motivate, and guide others toward achieving collective goals. Moreover, the leadership performance among student leaders of HEIs in Manila demonstrated commendable outcomes, reinforcing that leadership competencies are closely associated with effective leadership. The high levels of performance observed among student leaders indicate their ability to consistently demonstrate the six domains measured by the SLBS: taking initiative and modeling the way, challenging the process, sharing goals, managing goals and tasks, task-oriented support, and people-oriented support (Kimura et al., 2022). These results show that student leaders have the skills for effective leadership and put them into action, achieving goals and supporting their teams.

The correlation analyses revealed that burnout and leadership performance had a weak and non-significant relationship, suggesting that while moderate burnout exists, student leaders can manage stress in ways that do not diminish their leadership effectiveness, thus supporting the perspective of Salmela-Aro and Upadyaya (2018) that adaptive coping strategies may mitigate the impact of stress. Academic performance demonstrated a weak link to leadership performance, suggesting that high scholarly achievement does not guarantee effectiveness in leadership. This aligns with Komives et al.'s (2013) observation that leadership is based on competency and interpersonal utilization rather than just academics. In the local context, David et al. (2019) noticed a pattern of equating academic performance to leadership competency; they may be missing students with high leadership skills, but who may have average academic performance (Cruz, 2014).

On the other hand, there was a strong correlation between leadership skills and leadership performance, indicating that effective leadership outcomes are directly influenced by the competencies that are developed and used in leadership roles (Yukl et al., 2013). According to Shomotova and Ibrahim (2024) active participation in organizational tasks only hones the competencies of student leaders. This conclusion was supported by the linear regression analysis, which showed that leadership performance is significantly predicted by leadership skills. The finding is also supported by Cherniss (2000) and Gannouni and Ramboarisin-Lalao (2018), who both stated that student leaders with strong leadership skills are more likely to excel in their roles, translating competencies into measurable performance outcomes.

The results show that student leaders in HEIs Manila are resilient, capable, and academically competent. However, burnout should be emphasized since this factor could affect the overall well-being of student leaders, even though the findings suggest its weak relationship to leadership performance. Once overlooked, it may compromise the student leaders' resilience and amplify vulnerability to mental health concerns since juggling multiple responsibilities as student leaders may increase stress (Trockel, Barnes, & Egget, 2000). Based on Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping, HEIs in Manila can create mental health support programs incorporating coping mechanisms appropriate for student leaders, like stress management and resilience programs, psychoeducational workshops, peer mentoring, and mindfulness training. Also, in line with the Job-Demands-Resources (JD-R) model by Bakker and Demerouti (2014), universities can reduce burnout by providing enough resources for the job's demands. These may include organizational support systems, coaching on

leadership, and counseling services. This result is also consistent with Wu and Zhao (2023) finding that burnout rates are lower when student leadership development and mental health intervention programs are introduced among universities, and student engagement and leadership effectiveness are higher.

The study advocates for higher education providers in Manila to develop leadership skills and integrate mental health services that equip student leaders with the competencies needed to succeed, while maintaining their mental well-being despite the specific demands of student leadership. The proposed mental health support program underscores the importance of prioritizing the needs of student leaders by alleviating student burnout, improving leadership competencies, impacting academic success, and increasing mental health literacy and peer support. In implementing the said program, education providers must carefully consider available resources and identify the support needed from other units to ensure efficient and sustainable implementation. In connection, Langley et al. (2010) pointed out the role of school administrators in constructing and sustaining a positive school setting, which is vital to the success of mental health and support programs (Hallinger & Heck, 1996, as cited in Daly et al., 2025). Similarly, Gay and Barth (2024) indicate that institutions should design programs specific to the challenges and developmental needs unique to student leaders. When higher education institutions integrate leadership development opportunities with mental health support initiatives, they promote resilience, strengthen coping strategies, and foster overall well-being that can lead to sustainable leadership performance and a healthier campus environment.

Author contributions. (Not available)

Conflict of interest. The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Funding source. This research received no external funding.

Artificial intelligence use. AI-assisted language editing was performed; authors reviewed and approved all content.

Ethics approval statement. This study involved human respondents; however, formal ethical approval was not sought from the authors' institution. The authors affirm that participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, and confidentiality of responses was strictly maintained. No procedures were undertaken that posed risk or harm to the participants.

Data availability statement. All data supporting the findings of this study are included within the manuscript and its supplementary materials.

Acknowledgement. (Not available)

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