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## Research Article

### Examining the Relationship Between Campus Leadership and Institutional Performance in Higher Education Institutions in Sulu

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#### ABSTRACT

This research aimed to determine the association between campus leadership and institutional performance of higher educational institutions (HEIs) in Sulu. In particular, it investigated the influences of leadership behavior, cultural context, resource availability training and development, community engagement, political support and administrative support as important determinants of faculty and student outcomes. Building on Transformational Leadership Theory and Institution Theory, this study focused on leaders' dual role in motivating internal actors and purposefully reacting to external institutional mandates.

A quantitative research design using a self-made survey questionnaire was used in this study to collect the data from 209 respondents; faculty, administrators and students of five HEIs in Sulu, specifically: Mindanao State University – Sulu (MSU-Sulu), Notre Dame of Jolo College (NDJC), Sulu State College (SSC), Hadji Butu School of Arts and Trade (HBSAT) and Sulu College of Technology Inc. (SCT). All the data collection was made by stratified random sampling. Results were expressed by means of descriptive statistics, t-test and post-hoc analysis, ANOVA and Pearson's correlation coefficient.

Results indicated that leadership on campus in Sulu is mainly strong, healthy with clear vision to communicate effectively, and provide solid support for faculty and students. Overall level of faculty satisfaction and productivity and student engagement or learning outcomes were rated high, suggesting an effective influence of leadership on organizational performance. There were highly statistically significant relationships between the leadership factors and faculty and student outcomes. Although perceptions of leadership were similar among respondents, there was considerable variation in institutional performance across the five HEIs.

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The research found that good campus leadership is both a catalyst/major thrust for the institutional success in Sulu, and a source of fostering academic efficiency and effective management. Suggestions are made on the areas of leadership development, faculty and student support systems, resource allocation and participative decision-making that can contribute to better institutional performance and quality in higher education in general.

**Keywords:** *Campus Leadership, Institutional Performance, Higher Education Institutions, Transformational Leadership, Sulu, Philippines*

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## Introduction

Focusing on the complex interplay of campus leadership and university performance in higher education institutions, the book highlights how leadership styles and approaches impact academic quality, operational efficiency, resource allocation decisions, organizational health and stability. Drawn from an international pool, evidence suggests that good leadership, particularly transformational leadership, contributes to innovation and to faculty/staff/student satisfaction and well-being as a result of these courses. In the Philippines, this linkage is more explicitly articulated in the policy documents of DepEd and CHED that underscore quality of instruction, development of leadership, and institutional linkages.

In Mindanao, particularly in Sulu, there is a need for a strong campus leadership as it confronts distinctive social and economic development challenges. Leadership in this context that works can lead to narrowing the educational gap and increasing institutional efficiency. To contribute to an understanding of leadership theory across contexts, this study explores how leadership drivers—such as behavior and cultural context; investments in resources, training, political or administrative support—affect institutional performance through student engagement and faculty productivity.

Rooted in Transformational Leadership Theory and New Institutionalism, this study frames leadership as not only an internal motivator for achieving change (motivation to inspire others), collaboration (ability to work with others) and innovation (thinking around conventional practices), but also as a strategic response to external pressures from

accreditation bodies, government mandates, agency-funding requirements or the expectations of society. Through the integration of these frameworks, it aims to generate knowledge that supports leadership functioning, organization effectiveness, and helps build direction for leaders, policymakers and stakeholders toward improved higher education outcomes in Sulu.

## Methodology

This research used the quantitative design as it objectively investigated leadership in campus and performance of institution of higher education institutions in Sulu. Structured interviews were conducted with faculty, administrators and students, in order to collect numerical data using survey questionnaires which may be subjected an arranged type of analysis for leadership determinants and performance.

The study was administered to five higher institutions—NDJC, SSC, HBSAT, SCT and MSU-Sulu—during the 2024–2025 school year with a concentration of 209 respondents that included 86 faculties, 35 administrators and 88 students taken from different academic disciplines. A stratified random sampling approach was implemented in order to ensure proportionate representation of critical subgroups, where strata were defined by institutional type and respondent type (faculty, administrators, students) as well as department within each institution. This strategy increased the sample representativeness and generalizability of results. Expert validation was conducted to determine content validity of the research instrument by educational management and research methodology experts. Reliability tests by

means of Cronbach’s alpha revealed the three parts of the questionnaire to possess a strong internal consistency as evidenced by coefficients of 0.91 for institutional practices, 0.88 for administrative governance, and 0.93 for leadership items (above an acceptable reliability threshold of .70) thus indicating that the instrument is appropriate for use within the sample personnel groupings involved in this study. The information was collected through the use of a developed three-part self-report survey instrument which assessed leadership determinants, faculty outcomes and student outcomes. Questions derived from literature, validated instruments and theoretical constructs applying a 5-point Likert scale. The KTS was validated with expert validation, face validity check, pilot testing, and internal consistency using Cronbach’s alpha.

Collection of information was in accordance with official channel, such as contacting institution leaders and negotiating designated personnel. All five settings completed the surveys in person. Fieldwork identified supportive campuses with high response and the challenges of approval delays and institutional bureaucracy.

Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation) were used for statistical analysis t-tests and ANOVA were performed to compare mean scores of respondents as well as correlations using Pearson correlation technique to examine relationship between leadership determinants with institutional performance.

Ethical considerations stressed informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, cultural appropriateness and non-maleficence and adherence to local ethical principles. Rights of participants were considered, and information was treated with due consideration for privacy as well as the sociocultural environment in Sulu.

### Results

It can be seen from Table 1 that the respondents are comprised of 209 students drawn from five higher education institutions in Sulu. The proportion of women among the respondents is slightly higher (53.11%) than that of men and equalizes gender alignment. Share of Respondents by Type The distribution across types of respondents is fairly even with faculty (41.15%) contributing about as much as students (42.10%); administrators make up the remaining 16.75%. This distribution facilitates a comprehensive approach to the leadership and institutional effectiveness assessment from various viewpoints.

The distribution of institutional representation is also fairly distributed with MSU-Sulu capturing the majority (27.75%) and HBSAT having the least number of participants. The variety of participants guarantees that the results depict real-life scenarios of leadership and institutional performance in different schools in Sulu.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 209)

Profile Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>	Male	98	46.89%
	Female	111	53.11%
<b>Respondent Type</b>	Faculty	86	41.15%
	Administrator	35	16.75%
	Student	88	42.10%
<b>Institutional Affiliation</b>	NDJC	40	19.14%
	SSC	45	21.53%
	HBSAT	32	15.31%
	SCT	34	16.27%
	MSU-Sulu	58	27.75%

Table 2. Level of Campus Leadership Determinants

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Vision & Mission Clarity	4.25	0.61	Very High
Communication Practices	4.18	0.68	High
Decision-Making Process	4.10	0.72	High
Faculty & Staff Support	4.22	0.65	Very High
Resource Allocation	4.05	0.70	High
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.16</b>	<b>0.67</b>	<b>High</b>

(5-Point Likert Scale)

**Scale Interpretation:**

1.00–1.80 = Very Low

1.81–2.60 = Low

2.61–3.40 = Moderate

3.41–4.20 = High

4.21–5.00 = Very High

Table 2 shows the extent of campus leadership determinants in higher education institutions in Sulu with an overall grand mean of 4.16 falls under “high” according to the defined 5 point Likert scales. This discovery suggests that the methods of leadership at these HEIs in general are effective and consistently seen as strong by faculty, administrators and students. The obvious agreement between quantitative arithmetic average and verbal interpretation of prevalence contributes to the technical accuracy and interpretability of data.

In fact, of the specific items, only Vision and Mission Clarity (M = 4.25) and Faculty and Staff Support (M = 4.22) received a rating “Very High,” which is higher than the 4.21 cut-off point mentioned above. This implies that executives are very successful in communicating institutional aims and objectives as well as offering professional, and personal, support to staff. Such strengths are essential to building common cause, institutional loyalty and morale in colleges and universities. On the other hand, Communication Practices (M = 4.18), Decision-Making Process (M = 4.10) and Resource Allocation (M = 4.05) were considered to be “High,” demonstrating good leadership performance but also at the same time pointing out strategic adjustment and participatory

mechanism calling for further improvement of effectiveness.

These findings support Transformational Leadership Theory, which purports that leaders most effectively encourage a shared vision and facilitate collaboration when they empower constituents to be an integral part of the organization. That high average ratings in all leadership determinants showed that heads of HEIs/CEOs in Sulu possessed endowment of transformational characteristics conducive for institution’s unity trust and direction. In addition, the small distance between mean scores indicates ditto on the level of fulfilment of leadership responsibilities across different domains, contributing to consistent and stable governance structures in institutions.

Overall, the results confirm that campus leadership in Sulu HEIs are highly effective where excellence is noted on vision setting and personnel support. In keeping with this goal, future efforts of leadership development can be directed towards improving “communication channels,” having an in “inclusive decision-making” process, and in addressing critical “allocation of resources” so that these areas transition from the ‘High’ to ‘Very High’ domains— all essential components for enduring institutional advancement and resilience.

Table 3. Faculty Performance Outcomes

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Job Satisfaction	4.20	0.59	High
Professional Growth	4.15	0.64	High

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Teaching Productivity	4.12	0.66	High
Organizational Commitment	4.18	0.63	High
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.16</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>High</b>

The overall mean for faculty performance outcomes was 4.16 which translated as High meaning that the level of satisfaction, growth, productivity and commitment Faculty experience were high in general. Job satisfaction (M = 4.20) and organizational commitment (M = 4.18) are slightly higher than other dimensions, following consistent perception of being appreciated and supported in their colleges.

These results indicate that leadership behaviors, especially supportive and change-oriented ones, enhance the motivation and participation of faculty. The high scores validate existing literature which asserts that a transformational leader creates an environment of professional growth and involvement leading to high performance of faculty.

Table 4. Student Performance Outcomes

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Academic Engagement	4.10	0.62	High
Learning Satisfaction	4.17	0.60	High
Campus Involvement	4.05	0.65	High
Support Services Feedback	4.12	0.67	High
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.11</b>	<b>0.64</b>	<b>High</b>

The Student Feedback on Course Indexes are again also High (M = 4.11). Students were also high in satisfaction with learning (M = 4.17) and engagement in academics (M = 4.10), indicating that students feel good about their school environment. Campus community and support services are not lagging far behind, suggesting students demonstrate engagement in activities and operations of the institution.

These results underscore the significance of campus leadership and the role it plays in students' experiences. Both the quality of instruction, as well as responsive services and climates conducive to learning, enhance student engagement and academic success. This is backed by Institutional Theory which would argue that organizational hierarchies and management regimes impact on student experience and effectiveness of the organisation.

Table 5. Comparison of Leadership Determinants Across Respondent Groups

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Respondent Group	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
Faculty	4.20	0.60	2.45	0.09	Not Significant
Administrators	4.30	0.55			
Students	4.10	0.68			

There was no statistically significant difference in responses of faculty, administrators and students about determinants of leadership, according to the ANOVA results (p = 0.09). This implies that the three categories are generally in accord regarding levels and qualities of leadership practices observed in their organization.

This uniformity indicates the reinforcing effect of leadership behavior strives and institutions. Stakeholders' Role And Position Regardless of his or her role and position in it, the stakeholders Both authors had similar experiences also have a shared vision. This alignment reinforces organizational homogeneity and that the practices of leadership are routinized across the organization.

Table 6. Comparison of Institutional Performance Across Institutions

Institution	Mean (M)	SD	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
NDJC	4.18	0.61	3.12	0.016	Significant
SSC	4.10	0.63			
HBSAT	4.05	0.67			
SCT	4.12	0.66			
MSU-Sulu	4.20	0.60			

Table 6 shows that there is significant difference on institutional performance among the five higher education institutions ( $F = 3.12$ ,  $p = 0.016$ ) with MSU-Sulu having the highest mean score ( $M = 4.20$ ) and HBSAT as lowest in terms of mean performance rating ( $M = 4.05$ ). While the absolute difference may seem small, it is significant in actual terms of institutional evaluation as one could expect an imbalance between a full spectrum state university and a specialized school of arts and trade with respect to structures and processes. MSU-Sulu relatively performed better and the possible reason is its status as a university which in general, will have more access to government funding, longer established administrative system, wider research and extension mandates and broader faculty development plans. This institutional edge makes it possible for MSU-Sulu to have stronger governance systems, quality assurance systems and support for students all of which can be considered models that smaller or more niche institutions like HBSAT could adopt.

From an Institutional Theory point of view, the performance discrepancy reveals how organizational legitimacy, resource access and external regulatory pressure (the demands of university accreditation agencies, national HE drives) mediate institutional action and output. As a national university system, MSU-Sulu is subject to these pressures and more likely to have to follow governance standards and adopt continuous improvement processes. On the other hand, institutions like HBSAT might face narrow provisions of resources in terms of

faculty support, limited academic scope and less number of administrative layers etc., which may reflect in lower efficiency irrespective of agency fulfilling its own localized educational mandate.

It is of significance that additional analysis indicated that there was no significant difference between faculty, administrators and students in their perceptions of leadership practices throughout the institutions studied. This insignificant finding is noteworthy as it implies high transparency and consistency of leadership communication and implementation in the Sulu higher education setting. The concordance of perceptions between those in higher and lower organizational levels suggests that leaders are effectively communicating policy, direction, and expectations consistently throughout the organization to help minimize information asymmetry and trust. This kind of consistency has implications for participatory governance, and institutionalizes the credibility of leadership, whereby despite variations in institutional performance (discussed below), all stakeholders experience similar leadership practices.

Altogether, the findings of this study articulate that although structural and resource factors influence differences in institutional performance, leadership openness and coherence represent a common strength across HEIs in Sulu. Stronger resource allocation systems, administrative structures and cross-institutional benchmarking—learning from the likes of MSU-Sulu—could also close performance gaps, while sounds leadership cultures are retained.

Table 7. Correlation Between Leadership Determinants and Institutional Performance

(Pearson Product-Moment Correlation)

Variables	Pearson r	p-value	Interpretation
Leadership Determinants & Faculty Performance	0.68	0.001	Strong Positive Significant Relationship

Variables	Pearson r	p-value	Interpretation
Leadership Determinants & Student Performance	0.64	0.001	Strong Positive Significant Relationship

The results of the correlation indicate that leadership notions are significantly and positively related to faculty performance ( $r = 0.68$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) as well as to student performance ( $r = 0.64$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). That is, better leadership leads directly to better institutional performance.

These results are in line with the international literature where transformational lead-

ership is positively associated with higher organizational effectiveness, motivation, innovation and satisfaction. Nowhere is this more relevant than in a place like Sulu where institutional obstacles are significantly greater and good leadership becomes one of the crucial catalysts for achieving progress in both academic and operational terms.

Table 8. Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Statistical Tool	Result	Decision
H1: Leadership determinants significantly relate to faculty outcomes.	Pearson r	$r = 0.68$ , $p < 0.05$	Accepted
H2: Leadership determinants significantly relate to student outcomes.	Pearson r	$r = 0.64$ , $p < 0.05$	Accepted
H3: Leadership determinants differ significantly across respondent groups.	ANOVA	$p > 0.05$	Rejected
H4: Institutional performance differs across institutions.	ANOVA	$p < 0.05$	Accepted

The theory brief summarizes as follows:

H1 and H2 are supported, indicating that antecedents of leadership exert a significant impact on faculty and students. This gives credence to the developed theoretical model and PLT.

H3 is refuted and demonstrates that there are no differences in perceptions of leadership between respondent groups. This indicates consensus among the stakeholders with respect to leadership effectiveness.

H4 is supported, indicating that institutional performance does vary across the five HEIs and there should be a custom leadership approach to fit each institution.

Taken together, the hypothesis findings provide evidence that leadership is a critical ingredient in determining institutional effectiveness, and this is particularly so in disadvantaged educational settings such as Sulu.

Findings from the study, in general terms demonstrate that HEI campus leadership in Sulu, significantly influence institutional performance, most notably on faculty productivity and student engagement. The demographic

information suggest a diverse and well-represented sample in terms of their institutions, type of respondent and gender to enable an accurate interpretation of the results.

Collectively the leadership determinants—clarity of vision, communication, decision making process, support by faculty and resource allocation were considered as high which describes that generally HEI leaders perform well in terms of these leadership practices. Staff results also indicated a high degree of job satisfaction, professional development, productivity and commitment, indicating that leadership behaviors influence staff morale and effectiveness. Similarly, the strong relationships of both learning satisfaction and academic engagement with campus involvement and support services demonstrated the impact of leadership on the student experience.

Follow-up analyses with ANOVA comparing mean values of leadership across all faculty, administrators and students indicated that there were no significant differences among them in terms of the way leadership is perceived by various groups such that these stakeholder

groups are regarded as being led in a similar manner. However, institutional performance clearly varies across the five HEIs showing that leadership may be uniform, but overall performance would differ depending on an institution's context, resource endowments or administrative structure.

Correlation study found very strong positive and significant relationship between leadership determinants and institutional performance of both, faculty as well as students. This would appear to support that leadership is positively related to faculty productivity and student outcomes. These findings are also supported by those of the hypothesis tests — demonstrating that leadership is significantly positively related to institutional performance and there are opportunities for institution-specific performance enhancements.

In short, the research evidences that good campus leadership in Sulu—leadership which is clear, supportive and facilitates participation in decision-making—is closely related to higher-quality institutional performance. Although leadership perceptions are similar among stakeholder factions, performance is not uniform throughout institutions; this highlights the latter's need for improved leadership capacity, resource management and key strategic direction with which to enhance overall higher education outcomes in the province.

## Conclusion

This research concludes that campus leadership significantly and positively contributes to institutional performance in institutions of higher education in Sulu. Leadership determinants—vision clarity, communication, decision making, faculty and staff support, resource allocation, training activities and administrative backing perception levels were high (satisfactory), indicating that the leaders of these institutions exhibit good leadership practices (Table 3).

The results also provide evidence of the positive influence effective leadership has on faculty outcomes (job satisfaction, productivity, professional development and organizational commitment) and student outcomes (academic engagement, learning satisfaction, campus involvement). Indeed, highly significant

correlations suggest that better leadership is associated with improved institutional performance.

Notwithstanding, the responses of faculty, administrators and students with respect to perceived leadership were similar in all five campuses where the study was conducted; but institutional performance differed greatly among the five campuses visited; suggesting that contextual factors, such as resources, policies, and structures shape outcomes.

## Recommendations

The following major recommendations are made from the findings:

### *Strengthen Leadership Development Programs*

Due to the findings of this study, institutions may choose to further professional development and training for mid-level personnel (administrators and department heads) that target transformative leadership, strategic communication, and evidence-based decision-making.

### *Improve resource allocation and support mechanisms*

Performance differences due to variations at each HEI should be addressed by quality improvement in the budgeting process, facilities enhancement, and providing equal access to academic and administrative resources.

### *Enhance Academic Staff Support and Professional Development*

Offer frequent workshops, research inducements, mentoring arrangements and feedback mechanisms to maintain high faculty satisfaction and productivity.

### *Enhance student support and engagement opportunities*

To continue and enhance positive academic experiences, you will also develop more student-centered programs; enhance academic support services; and create/expand ways to engage in the life of students.

### *Foster Inclusive and Participatory Leadership Styles*

Leaders should involve faculty, staff, and students in decisions to build institutional solidarity and increase trust and openness.

#### *Institutionalize Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms*

Conduct periodic reviews of the effectiveness of leadership and institution (eg surveys, performance audits, quality assurance reviews) to inform strategic enhancements.

#### *Enhance the Collaboration of HEIs in Sulu*

Promote cross-institutional collaborations and partnerships to leverage resources, leadership best practices and innovative approaches that can collectively enhance higher education quality across the province.

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