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EMOTIONAL LABOR AS MEDIATOR AND SELF-EFFICACY AS MODERATOR IN WORK-RELATED BURNOUT AMONG HEADS OF STUDY PROGRAMS

Hamam Zaki¹⁾, Rahayu Setianingsih²⁾, Sri Rahmayanti³⁾

^{1,2,3} Universitas Muhammadiyah Riau, Pekanbaru, Indonesia

Email: hammamzaki@umri.ac.id



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ABSTRACT

Work-related burnout among Heads of Study Programs is an increasing concern due to growing academic, administrative, and managerial responsibilities in higher education. Although burnout has been widely examined among lecturers and other professionals, evidence focusing on Heads of Study Programs remains limited, particularly regarding the mediating role of emotional labor and the moderating role of self-efficacy. This study examines the effects of job demands and emotional intelligence on work-related burnout, with emotional labor as a mediator and self-efficacy as a moderator. Data were collected from 249 Heads of Study Programs at Muhammadiyah universities in Indonesia established less than ten years ago and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4.0. The findings show that job demands increase work-related burnout, while emotional intelligence influences emotional labor. Emotional labor increases burnout and mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout. However, self-efficacy does not moderate the relationship between job demands and burnout. These findings extend the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) perspective by identifying emotional labor as an important psychological mechanism and highlighting the need for organizational support to reduce burnout and promote sustainable academic leadership.

Keywords: job demands; self-efficacy; emotional intelligence; emotional labor; work-related burnout.

INTRODUCTION

Work-related burnout has emerged as a significant occupational health challenge affecting employees and organizational leaders across various sectors, including higher education. Increasing organizational complexity, rapid digital transformation, and expanding administrative responsibilities have intensified the psychological demands placed on individuals in the workplace. The Gallup State of the Global Workplace 2026 report indicates that global manager engagement declined from 31% in 2022 to 22% in 2025, highlighting growing concerns about the well-being and sustainability of individuals occupying managerial roles. Given their responsibility for simultaneously managing organizational performance, employee expectations, and increasingly complex workplace demands, managers represent an important occupational group in understanding vulnerability to work-related burnout.

Similar challenges have become increasingly evident in the higher education sector. Recent studies suggest that excessive administrative responsibilities, escalating workloads, and inadequate institutional support are among the key factors contributing to burnout among

university academics. These pressures are particularly concerning because academic work increasingly involves responsibilities that extend beyond traditional teaching and research functions to include administrative duties, quality assurance, accreditation requirements, and institutional performance expectations (Koster & McHenry, 2023). Consequently, burnout in higher education should no longer be viewed solely as an individual psychological problem but as a broader organizational challenge with potential implications for leadership effectiveness, employee well-being, educational quality, and institutional performance.

In Indonesia, Heads of Study Programs hold strategic positions because they are responsible for ensuring curriculum quality, achieving accreditation standards, overseeing lecturer performance, providing student services, and maintaining institutional governance. Unlike managerial positions in many corporate organizations, they simultaneously serve as academic leaders, administrative managers, curriculum coordinators, quality assurance officers, human resource supervisors, and intermediaries between university management, lecturers, students, and external stakeholders. Balancing these multiple responsibilities requires continuous emotional regulation, effective leadership, and sustained professional commitment, while they often operate under conditions of limited organizational resources. These challenges are expected to be even greater in relatively young universities, where governance systems, organizational resources, and quality assurance mechanisms are still developing (Bowo & Hendro, 2023; Kurniadewi et al., 2022). According to the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Theory, prolonged exposure to excessive job demands without sufficient organizational and personal resources gradually depletes employees' psychological energy. It ultimately leads to work-related burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Therefore, work-related burnout among Heads of Study Programs should be viewed not only as an individual psychological problem but also as an organizational issue that may undermine leadership effectiveness, lecturer performance, educational quality, and institutional sustainability.

Several studies have examined burnout in higher education settings, particularly among students and academic staff (A'yunin et al., 2023; Burns et al., 2021). Burnout among managers has also been investigated across various corporate settings and among healthcare professionals (Membrive-Jiménez et al., 2020). Although the existing literature has extensively examined burnout across a wide range of professions, research specifically addressing burnout among Heads of Study Programs remains notably limited. Heads of Study Programs are required to balance academic autonomy with organizational accountability, which may intensify psychological strain and emotional exhaustion (Mandefro et al., 2025). Despite the complexity of these responsibilities, empirical studies specifically investigating burnout among Heads of Study Programs remain scarce, particularly in developing countries where institutional transformation and resource constraints are more pronounced (Ghamrawi et al., 2025; Islam et al., 2025). Recent studies have also predominantly examined work-related burnout among lecturers, teachers, healthcare professionals, and corporate employees, highlighting the adverse effects of excessive workloads, emotional demands, and organizational pressures on psychological well-being (Koster & McHenry, 2023). Therefore, understanding burnout within the context of leadership among Heads of Study Programs remains an important research priority.

Academic work is often characterized by substantial responsibilities and limited resources, conditions that may increase the risk of burnout. High job demands tend to increase stress and trigger emotional exhaustion, which is widely recognized as a core dimension of work-related burnout (Ekore et al., 2020). Supporting this view, Golu et al. (2022) reported that job demands are an important determinant of work-related burnout. A growing body of

research, conducted predominantly in Western countries, has further confirmed the positive relationship between job demands and work-related burnout (Fouquereau et al., 2019). Nevertheless, studies examining this relationship in non-Western contexts, such as Indonesia, remain limited, particularly those focusing on work-related burnout among Heads of Study Programs.

The responsibilities of Heads of Study Programs are closely associated with emotional labor, which may contribute to work-related burnout when not managed effectively. This argument is supported by evidence indicating that academic supervisors often experience difficulties in regulating their emotions, thereby increasing their vulnerability to work-related burnout. In emotionally demanding work environments, particularly in service-oriented professions, a high level of emotional intelligence is essential for managing emotional experiences appropriately (Ezekiel & Nanfa, 2023). This study examines the relationship between emotional labor and work-related burnout, as previous research has demonstrated that excessive emotional labor significantly increases employees' risk of experiencing work-related burnout. Employees who are consistently required to control, suppress, or modify their emotions in demanding work situations are more vulnerable to emotional exhaustion and psychological distress (Humphrey, 2023). Recent empirical studies have also consistently reported a positive relationship between emotional labor and work-related burnout across various professional settings, including academia (Davis & Stazyk, 2022). Individuals with high emotional intelligence are generally better able to regulate their emotions and transform them into constructive psychological responses, enabling them to adapt more effectively to complex social and occupational environments (Fteiha & Awwad, 2020).

In behavioral studies, mediating and moderating variables play important roles in explaining psychological processes, although each serves a distinct function (Igartua & Hayes, 2021). Previous empirical research on emotional labor has predominantly examined its relationship with organizational outcomes, particularly emotional exhaustion and work-related burnout (Ardanty et al., 2023). Nevertheless, relatively limited attention has been devoted to the role of emotional labor as a mediating variable. Choi et al. (2019), for instance, explored the relationship between emotional intelligence and work-related burnout by incorporating several mediating and moderating factors into their analysis. In the present study, emotional labor is proposed as a mediator that explains the underlying mechanism linking emotional intelligence to work-related burnout (Nurochim et al., 2022). Effective management of emotional labor may minimize adverse psychological consequences and reduce the likelihood of work-related burnout, whereas ineffective emotion regulation may exacerbate burnout symptoms (Nam & Kabutey, 2021; Wang et al., 2023).

Despite the growing body of literature on work-related burnout, several important research gaps remain. Recent studies have predominantly examined burnout among lecturers, teachers, healthcare professionals, and corporate employees, highlighting the adverse effects of excessive workloads, emotional demands, and organizational pressures on psychological well-being (Rinfret et al., 2025). However, empirical evidence specifically focusing on Heads of Study Programs remains limited, despite their strategic responsibilities for academic quality, accreditation, curriculum implementation, and institutional performance. Existing research has also largely examined the independent effects of job demands, emotional intelligence, or emotional labor on work-related burnout (Humphrey, 2023), while relatively limited attention has been devoted to examining emotional labor as the underlying psychological mechanism through which emotional intelligence influences work-related burnout, or self-efficacy as a moderating factor that may mitigate the adverse effects of job

demands. Furthermore, much of the existing empirical evidence originates from developed countries and well-established universities.

In contrast, studies conducted in private higher education institutions—particularly relatively young Muhammadiyah universities operating within evolving governance systems, limited organizational resources, and increasing institutional demands—remain scarce (Kurniadewi et al., 2022). Consequently, existing evidence has yet to provide a comprehensive explanation of how organizational demands, emotional processes, and personal resources interact to shape work-related burnout among Heads of Study Programs. To address these gaps, the present study develops an integrated conceptual model that simultaneously examines the relationships among job demands, emotional intelligence, emotional labor, self-efficacy, and work-related burnout, thereby providing new empirical evidence from an underexplored higher education context.

This study makes both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it extends the application of the JD-R framework to Heads of Study Programs and integrates emotional intelligence and emotional labor into the explanation of work-related burnout. The study also examines whether self-efficacy plays a moderating role in the relationship between job demands and work-related burnout. Practically, understanding these mechanisms may help higher education institutions shift from individually oriented burnout interventions toward strategies that simultaneously address workload, organizational support, leadership resources, and emotion regulation. This is particularly important because the well-being of Heads of Study Programs may influence leadership effectiveness, academic quality, decision-making, and the sustainability of study program management.

Academic work is characterized by considerable responsibilities and limited resources, conditions that may increase vulnerability to burnout. Higher education employees experience multiple demands, including workload, publication pressure, competing time demands, technology-mediated work, student support responsibilities, and insufficient structural resources (Naidoo-Chetty & Du Plessis, 2021). The Job Demands–Resources Theory explains that job demands requiring sustained physical, cognitive, or emotional effort consume employees' psychological resources and may initiate a health-impairment process that eventually results in exhaustion and burnout (Bakker et al., 2023).

Previous studies have similarly demonstrated that high job demands increase stress and emotional exhaustion (Golu et al., 2022). However, evidence concerning this relationship among academic leaders remains limited, particularly in non-Western higher education contexts. Because Heads of Study Programs simultaneously manage academic, administrative, managerial, and interpersonal responsibilities, sustained job demands may progressively exhaust the resources required to maintain effective functioning. Therefore:

H1: Job demands have a positive effect on work-related burnout among Heads of Study Programs.

The responsibilities of Heads of Study Programs also involve substantial interpersonal and emotional interactions. They are expected to communicate with lecturers and students, resolve conflicts, respond to institutional demands, and maintain professional emotional expressions under challenging circumstances. Emotional intelligence enables individuals to perceive, understand, and regulate emotions, facilitating more effective management of emotionally demanding situations (Fteiha & Awwad, 2020).

From an emotional regulation perspective, individuals with higher emotional intelligence are better able to recognize their own and others' emotions and adapt their emotional expressions to situational demands. This capability is particularly relevant to emotional labor, which requires individuals to regulate emotional expressions in accordance with organizational expectations. Thus, emotional intelligence provides the psychological capacity through which academic leaders manage the emotional requirements embedded in their leadership roles.

H2: Emotional intelligence has a positive effect on emotional labor among Heads of Study Programs.

Emotional labor represents the effort required to regulate, suppress, or modify emotional expressions in accordance with occupational expectations. Although such regulation is often necessary for effective interpersonal interaction, persistent emotional regulation can consume psychological resources, particularly when displayed emotions differ from those actually experienced. This discrepancy may generate emotional dissonance and psychological strain, thereby increasing vulnerability to burnout.

Recent studies continue to identify emotional labor as an important occupational demand associated with psychological exhaustion and burnout across professional settings (Davis & Stazyk, 2022; Humphrey, 2023). For Heads of Study Programs, the need to remain professional and emotionally composed when addressing conflicts, complaints, performance pressures, and competing stakeholder expectations may create sustained emotional demands. Therefore:

H3: Emotional labor has a positive effect on work-related burnout among Heads of Study Programs.

Although job demands are important predictors of burnout, their effects may vary depending on individuals' personal resources. The JD-R Theory proposes that personal resources can influence how employees respond to demanding work environments (Bakker et al., 2023). Among these resources, self-efficacy reflects an individual's belief in their ability to manage challenging situations and accomplish work-related goals.

Individuals with stronger self-efficacy may perceive demanding situations as more manageable and may demonstrate greater persistence when confronting occupational difficulties. Accordingly, self-efficacy may function as a psychological buffer that reduces the extent to which high job demands translate into burnout. This potential buffering mechanism is particularly relevant to Heads of Study Programs because they regularly face multiple and simultaneous organizational demands. Therefore:

H4: Self-efficacy moderates the relationship between job demands and work-related burnout.

In behavioral research, mediation explains the mechanism through which one variable influence another (Igartua & Hayes, 2021). Previous emotional labor research has predominantly examined its direct association with outcomes such as exhaustion and burnout (Ardanty et al., 2023). However, emotional labor may also represent an important psychological process through which emotional intelligence influences work-related burnout.

Individuals with stronger emotional intelligence are better able to recognize and regulate emotional experiences, which can shape how they perform emotional labor in demanding interpersonal situations. Adaptive management of emotional labor may reduce psychological strain, whereas ineffective emotional regulation may intensify emotional exhaustion and burnout (Wang et al., 2023). Therefore, rather than assuming that emotional intelligence influences burnout independently, this study proposes that its influence operates

partly through the way academic leaders regulate emotions in performing their roles.

H5: Emotional labor mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and work-related burnout among Heads of Study Programs.

Based on the theoretical arguments and hypotheses developed above, this study proposes an integrated research framework incorporating job demands, emotional intelligence, emotional labor, self-efficacy, and work-related burnout. Emotional labor is positioned as a mediating mechanism, while self-efficacy is examined as a moderator of the relationship between job demands and work-related burnout. The proposed framework is presented in Figure 1

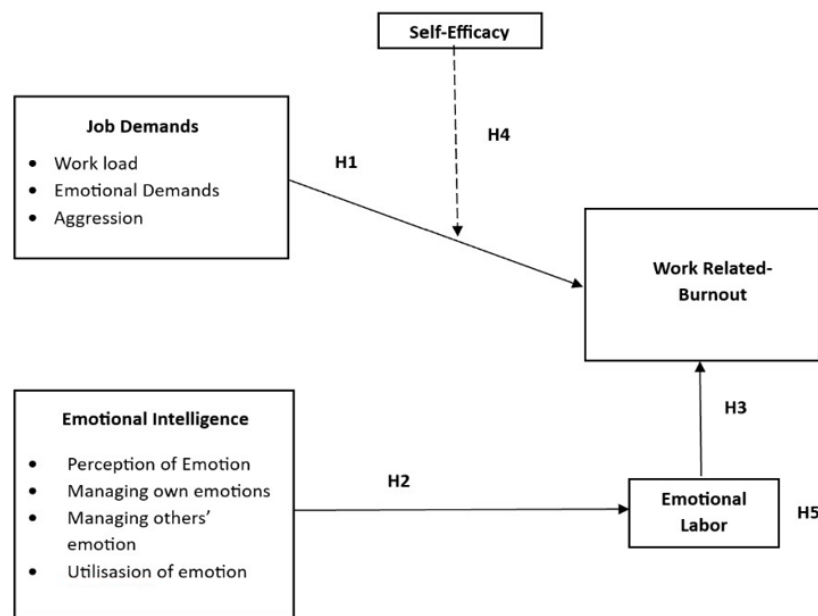


Figure 1. Research Framework

Source: Authors, 2026

METHODS

This study employs a quantitative approach to examine and describe the relationship between variables, identifying their cause-and-effect relationships. The population in this study consisted of all heads of study programs at D3, D4, Professional, Vocational, and S1 levels of Muhammadiyah Universities throughout Indonesia, comprising 22 universities with an institutional age of less than 10 years and a total population of 290 heads of study programs. This study employs a saturated or census sampling technique because it aims to make generalizations with minimal errors (Sugiyono, 2011). For this reason, the entire population was used as the sample in this study, comprising 290 heads of study programs.

This study employed a cross-sectional research design, as data collection was conducted at one specific point in time to investigate the relationships among the proposed variables. A quantitative approach was selected because the study sought to examine hypotheses and assess causal associations among latent variables through statistical procedures. Furthermore, the survey method allowed the researchers to gather standardized information from respondents representing various Muhammadiyah universities in Indonesia, thereby enhancing the consistency and comparability of the data obtained.

Job demands were measured using a 9-item instrument developed by Vander Elst et al. (2016). Emotional intelligence was evaluated through a 16-item instrument adapted from the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS), which has been extensively validated and utilized in recent organizational and educational research (Extremiera et al., 2018). Emotional labor was assessed using a 6-item scale introduced by Brotheridge and Lee and has been widely implemented in contemporary studies examining emotional labor within organizational and educational contexts (Jeung & Chang, 2021). Furthermore, self-efficacy was measured using an 8-item scale (Shoji et al., 2016), while work-related burnout was assessed through a 7-item instrument adapted from the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (Salvagioni et al., 2017), which has frequently been applied in occupational burnout research.

All responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”). Approval to use the original measurement instruments was obtained from the respective developers. In addition, the finalized questionnaire was reviewed by three experts to ensure the clarity, relevance, and completeness of the survey items. Data collection in this cross-sectional study was conducted through an online questionnaire distributed directly via official university email addresses. The questionnaire consisted of 46 items in total, and the study successfully obtained 249 valid responses, yielding a response rate of 85.86%.

Before conducting the main data collection, a pilot study was carried out with a small group of respondents to evaluate the clarity, readability, and overall understanding of the questionnaire items. Several minor modifications were subsequently implemented to improve the wording and sentence structure while preserving the original intent of the measurement instruments. In addition, respondents were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses in order to reduce potential response bias and encourage more accurate and honest participation during the survey process.

To analyze the relationships among the constructs, this study utilized the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) technique through SmartPLS 4. This analytical approach is considered suitable for modeling latent variables, particularly when dealing with relatively limited sample sizes and data that may not satisfy normal distribution assumptions (Hair Jr et al., 2023). The proposed research model consisted of multi-item constructs representing reflective measurement models rather than formative ones. The constructs demonstrated strong intercorrelations, adequate unidimensionality, and satisfactory internal consistency. Furthermore, the analysis followed a two-stage procedure, beginning with the evaluation of the measurement model and followed by the assessment of the structural model.

The evaluation of the measurement model involved examining internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Reliability was considered satisfactory when the values of Cronbach’s Alpha (CA) and Composite Reliability (CR) exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70. Convergent validity was established when the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were greater than 0.50, indicating that the constructs adequately explained the variance of their indicators. In addition, discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) approach. Following the assessment of the measurement model, the structural model was analyzed by evaluating path coefficients, coefficients of determination (R^2), effect sizes (f^2), and predictive relevance. Bootstrapping analysis was also performed to examine the statistical significance of both direct and indirect relationships among the proposed constructs.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Of the total survey participants, 114 were male (46%), and 135 were female (54%), reflecting a slight dominance of female heads of the study program in Muhammadiyah universities. The most significant proportion of respondents was in the 31-40 age group ($n=139$; 56%), followed by those aged 25-30 years ($n=82$; 33%) and those aged 41-50 years ($n=28$; 11%). All program chairpersons had attained higher education qualifications, including master's degrees, PhDs, and professional certifications. Regarding work experience as program chairpersons, the majority of participants had been employed in this role at their current universities for a significant period, ensuring well-informed survey responses. A small number of program chairpersons had less than one year of experience, while 136 had served for 1 to 2 years. In addition, 113 program chairpersons had worked at the institution for 3 to 4 years.

The assessment of construct validity demonstrated that all measurement requirements were satisfactorily fulfilled. In this study, indicator loadings above 0.70 were regarded as acceptable for confirming the adequacy of the measurement model. The results indicated that all nine indicators of Job Demands, 16 indicators of Emotional Intelligence, six indicators of Emotional Labor, eight indicators of Self-Efficacy, and seven indicators of Work-Related Burnout (WBO) met the recommended criteria, as presented in Table 1. Therefore, all questionnaire items were retained in the PLS-SEM analysis without the need for item elimination.

Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) criterion. Compared with the traditional Fornell–Larcker criterion, HTMT is considered a more rigorous approach for detecting discriminant validity issues among latent constructs. As shown in Table 1, all HTMT values were below the recommended threshold of 0.90, indicating that the discriminant validity requirements were successfully achieved.

Moreover, the reliability assessment indicated that all constructs within the proposed research model possessed adequate internal consistency. Both Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and Composite Reliability (CR) values for each latent construct surpassed the recommended cutoff value of 0.70, reflecting strong consistency and reliability among the measurement indicators. In addition, all Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeded 0.50, thereby demonstrating satisfactory convergent validity for every construct included in the study. These results suggest that the instruments applied in this research were sufficiently reliable and valid for examining the relationships among job demands, emotional intelligence, emotional labor, self-efficacy, and work-related burnout. Consequently, the measurement model fulfilled the necessary statistical criteria, allowing the analysis to proceed to the evaluation of the structural model using the PLS-SEM method.

The assessment of construct validity was performed to confirm that all measurement indicators satisfied the required standards of reliability and validity. In the present study, indicator loadings greater than 0.70 were regarded as acceptable, suggesting that each indicator had a strong relationship with its corresponding construct. As shown in Table 1, all indicators measuring Job Demands (JD), Emotional Intelligence (EI), Emotional Labor (EL), Self-Efficacy (SE), and Work-Related Burnout (WBO) achieved the recommended threshold criteria. The final model consisted of nine indicators for Job Demands, sixteen indicators for Emotional Intelligence, six indicators for Emotional Labor, eight indicators for Self-Efficacy, and seven indicators for Work-Related Burnout. Since all indicators met the required statistical standards, no items were removed from the analysis. These results demonstrate that

the measurement indicators adequately represented and explained their respective latent constructs.

Table 1. Results of Constructs Reliability, Convergent and Discriminant Validities

Construct	Reliability (CA & CR) Convergent Validity (AVE)				Discriminant Validity: Heterotrait Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)				
	Loadings	A	R	AVE	JD	SE	EI	EL	WBO
JD	0.863	0.976	0.978	0.745	0.863	0.807	0.828	0.834	0.879
SE	0.828	0.962	0.966	0.652					
EI	0.853	0.971	0.974	0.686					
EL	0.807	0.961	0.967	0.732					
WBO	0.823	0.946	0.958	0.698					

Note: CA= Cronbach's Alpha; CR=Composite Reliability; AVE=Average Variance Extracted;

HTMT=Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio

Source: Data processed, 2026

In addition, the reliability analysis indicated that all constructs demonstrated strong internal consistency, as evidenced by Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and Composite Reliability (CR) values that exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70. The CA values ranged between 0.946 and 0.976, while the CR values varied from 0.958 to 0.978, reflecting a high degree of reliability among all constructs incorporated in the research model. Convergent validity was also examined using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) criterion. The AVE values for all constructs were above the recommended minimum value of 0.50, ranging from 0.652 to 0.745, indicating that each construct was capable of adequately explaining the variance of its respective indicators. These findings confirm that the constructs employed in this study possessed satisfactory statistical reliability and conceptual validity in measuring the proposed variables.

Furthermore, discriminant validity was evaluated through the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) criterion, which is regarded as a more rigorous method than the conventional Fornell–Larcker criterion for assessing discriminant validity within PLS-SEM analysis. The HTMT values reported in Table 1 were all below the recommended cut-off value of 0.90, demonstrating that each construct was empirically distinguishable from the others. This result indicates that the latent variables in the study did not exhibit substantial overlap and were able to capture distinct conceptual dimensions. Overall, the measurement model showed adequate reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, thereby supporting the suitability of proceeding to the structural model evaluation.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was analyzed to assess the explanatory and predictive capacity of the endogenous latent variables within the structural model. Hair et al. (2017) further suggested that R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 may be interpreted as substantial, moderate, and weak levels of explanatory power, respectively. The R^2 results obtained in this study are summarized in Table 2. The findings showed that Job Demands (JD) and Emotional Labor (EL) together accounted for 70.2% of the variance in Work-Related Burnout (WBO), indicating that the proposed model possessed substantial predictive capability. This result implies that job demands and emotional labor play a major role in explaining burnout among study program leaders.

In contrast, the R^2 value for the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Emotional Labor (EL) was 0.269, suggesting that Emotional Intelligence explained 26.9% of the variance in Emotional Labor. Although this value may be interpreted as weak to moderate, it still indicates that emotional intelligence contributes meaningfully to the way study program

leaders manage emotional labor. Furthermore, the structural model assessment also incorporated effect size analysis using the f^2 criterion to evaluate the relative influence of each predictor construct. Based on established guidelines, f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 represent small, medium, and large effect sizes, respectively. As reported in Table 2, Job Demands showed a substantial effect on Work-Related Burnout, while Emotional Intelligence exerted a strong influence on Emotional Labor. Emotional Labor also demonstrated a meaningful contribution to Work-Related Burnout, highlighting its important role within the proposed conceptual model. Collectively, these findings indicate that the structural model developed in this study has satisfactory explanatory and predictive strength in explaining burnout among study program leaders at Muhammadiyah universities in Indonesia.

Table 2. Results of Structural Model Evaluation

Endogenous Construct	Predictive Power (R ²)	Predictor	Standardised beta	Effect size	f^2 inference
JD	0.702	WBO	0,623	0.837	Large
EL		WBO	0.211	0.087	Medium
EI	0.269	EL	0,521	0.373	Large

Source: Data processed, 2026

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to evaluate the predictive power of the endogenous constructs in the proposed structural model. The results indicate that Job Demands (JD) and Emotional Labor (EL) jointly explain 70.2% of the variance in Work-Related Burnout (WBO), demonstrating substantial predictive accuracy of the model. This finding suggests that the combination of excessive job demands and emotional labor plays a significant role in influencing burnout among study program leaders. Meanwhile, Emotional Intelligence (EI) explains 26.9% of the variance in Emotional Labor (EL), indicating a moderate predictive contribution. Furthermore, the effect size analysis (f^2) demonstrates that the relationship between JD and WBO has a large effect size, while the relationship between EI and EL also shows a substantial effect. In contrast, the effect size of EL on WBO is categorized as medium, suggesting that emotional labor contributes meaningfully to burnout, although its influence is relatively lower compared to job demands. Overall, these findings confirm that the proposed model possesses satisfactory explanatory and predictive capabilities in understanding work-related burnout among study program heads.

Prior to examining the direct and indirect effects, an assessment of multicollinearity among the predictor constructs was performed to ensure the stability and robustness of the structural model. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for all constructs were found to be below the recommended cut-off value of 5.0, indicating that multicollinearity did not pose a problem in this study. These findings suggest that the predictor variables were not excessively correlated and therefore did not bias the estimation of the structural path coefficients. Table 3 displays the structural relationships identified in the model along with their respective VIF values, supporting the suitability of the model for subsequent hypothesis testing.

In addition, a bootstrapping analysis with 5,000 resamples was conducted to determine the significance of both direct and indirect effects within the structural model. The findings revealed that the confidence intervals, including both the lower limit (LL) and upper limit (UL), did not contain zero for the statistically significant paths, thereby confirming the significance of the proposed relationships. This result provides empirical evidence supporting the existence of both direct and mediating effects among the variables examined in this study.

Moreover, the application of the bootstrapping procedure strengthened the robustness and reliability of the statistical estimates by reducing potential sampling bias and enhancing the precision of standard error calculations. Consequently, the results summarized in Table 3 offer comprehensive evidence regarding the relationships among job demands, emotional intelligence, emotional labor, self-efficacy, and work-related burnout.

Table 3. Results of Direct and Indirect Effects

Path Relationship			Std. Beta (β)	σ	t-value	p-value	LL	UL	Decision
Direct Effects									
JD	WBO		0.211	0.055	3.805	0.000	0.101	0.316	Accept
EI	EL		0.521	0.055	9.472	0.000	0.402	0.620	Accept
EL	WBO		0.606	0.056	10.895	0.000	0.497	0.713	Accept
Indirect effects									
JD	SE	WBO	0.077	0.039	1.987	0.047	-0.002	0.147	Reject
EI	EL	WBO	0.316	0.048	6.642	0.000	0.229	0.409	Accept

Source: Data processed, 2026

The results presented in Table 3 indicate that all direct relationships in the proposed model are statistically significant, as evidenced by t-values exceeding the recommended threshold of 1.96 and p-values below 0.05. Specifically, job demands significantly increase work-related burnout, suggesting that excessive academic and administrative responsibilities contribute to emotional exhaustion among study program leaders. Furthermore, emotional intelligence significantly influences emotional labor, indicating that individuals with higher emotional intelligence are better able to regulate and express emotions effectively in professional settings. Emotional labor was also found to significantly increase work-related burnout, implying that continuous emotional regulation in leadership roles may intensify psychological strain over time.

Regarding the indirect effects, emotional labor was found to successfully mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and work-related burnout. This finding suggests that emotional intelligence indirectly affects burnout through emotional management processes in the workplace. In contrast, the moderating effect of self-efficacy on the relationship between job demands and work-related burnout was not supported. Although the p-value was below 0.05, the confidence interval approached zero, indicating that the interaction effect was not statistically robust. Therefore, H4 was not supported. Overall, these findings confirm the robustness of the proposed structural model and provide empirical support for the theoretical framework developed in this study.

This study sought to provide a deeper understanding of how job demands contribute to work-related burnout among Heads of Study Programs at Muhammadiyah universities in Indonesia. The empirical support for H1 confirms RQ1, indicating that job demands constitute a significant antecedent of work-related burnout among academic leaders. More importantly, the findings suggest that burnout is not merely the consequence of a heavy workload; rather, it emerges through the cumulative effect of multiple organisational, managerial, and academic responsibilities that must be managed concurrently over an extended period.

Unlike lecturers whose responsibilities are primarily centred on teaching, research, and community engagement, Heads of Study Programs occupy a multifaceted leadership role that requires balancing strategic and operational responsibilities simultaneously. They are expected to coordinate curriculum implementation, ensure compliance with accreditation

standards, supervise academic staff, oversee administrative operations, monitor programme performance, and respond to expectations from university executives and external stakeholders. The convergence of these responsibilities creates persistent cognitive, emotional, and managerial demands that continuously consume psychological energy. Over time, this sustained resource depletion is likely to increase vulnerability to work-related burnout, particularly when institutional support is insufficient to offset escalating job demands.

These findings provide strong empirical support for the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Theory, which proposes that burnout develops when employees are exposed to prolonged job demands without sufficient organizational or personal resources to maintain psychological functioning (Bakker et al., 2023). From the perspective of the JD-R framework, excessive job demands activate the health impairment process, whereby continuous physical, cognitive, and emotional effort gradually exhausts employees' energetic resources and ultimately results in burnout. Recent developments of the theory further emphasize that burnout is driven not solely by workload intensity but by the imbalance between increasing organizational demands and the availability of supportive resources, particularly among individuals occupying complex leadership positions (Bakker et al., 2023). Consequently, the present findings reinforce the theoretical proposition that organizational demands represent a fundamental mechanism through which burnout develops among academic leaders.

The institutional context of Muhammadiyah universities provides an important explanation for these findings. As many of these institutions are relatively young and continue to strengthen their governance systems, quality assurance mechanisms, administrative procedures, and organizational infrastructure, Heads of Study Programs frequently assume responsibilities beyond their formal job descriptions. Such circumstances are likely to intensify role overload, increase psychological strain, and accelerate the depletion of personal resources, thereby creating favorable conditions for the emergence of work-related burnout.

The present findings are broadly consistent with previous studies conducted in higher education settings. Naidoo-Chetty and Du Plessis reported that increasing workloads, administrative responsibilities, and limited institutional resources significantly diminished academics' psychological well-being while increasing their susceptibility to burnout (Naidoo-Chetty and Du Plessis, 2021). Similarly, administrative burden and institutional demands as key predictors of burnout among academic personnel (Frintner et al., 2021). Persistent organizational demands contribute to emotional exhaustion and reduced work engagement in higher education institutions (Weber et al., 2023). Collectively, these studies support the argument that excessive organizational demands represent a consistent risk factor for burnout across academic environments.

Nevertheless, the present study extends the existing literature in several important ways. Previous research has predominantly focused on lecturers or academic staff, whereas empirical evidence concerning Heads of Study Programs remains limited. By examining academic leaders who simultaneously perform managerial, academic, and administrative functions, this study broadens the application of the Job Demands–Resources Theory within higher education leadership. Specifically, the findings demonstrate that the health impairment process is equally applicable to middle-level academic leaders working in relatively young private universities in developing countries, thereby extending the contextual boundary of the JD-R framework beyond traditional employee populations.

From a practical standpoint, these findings suggest that reducing burnout among Heads of Study Programs should not depend solely on individual resilience or personal coping

strategies. Instead, universities need to implement systemic organizational interventions that directly address the underlying sources of excessive job demands. Such interventions may include establishing a more equitable distribution of managerial responsibilities, strengthening administrative support, streamlining bureaucratic and accreditation processes, providing structured leadership development programs, and offering accessible psychological support services. These initiatives are expected not only to safeguard the well-being of academic leaders but also to enhance leadership effectiveness, maintain academic quality, and strengthen long-term institutional sustainability.

Overall, this study provides evidence supporting the applicability of the Job Demands–Resources Theory in explaining work-related burnout among academic leaders. The findings highlight that burnout should be understood as the cumulative consequence of prolonged exposure to excessive organizational demands in the absence of sufficient organizational resources. Consequently, promoting sustainable academic leadership requires universities to move beyond individual-level interventions and adopt organizational strategies that balance job demands with adequate structural, administrative, and psychological support. Such an approach is essential for preserving leaders' well-being while simultaneously sustaining institutional performance in an increasingly demanding higher education environment.

The next finding concerns the role of emotional intelligence in explaining emotional labour among Heads of Study Programs. The empirical results demonstrate that emotional intelligence has a significant positive effect on emotional labour among Heads of Study Programs at Muhammadiyah universities in Indonesia. This finding suggests that academic leaders with higher levels of emotional intelligence are better able to regulate, manage, and appropriately express their emotions when confronted with the complex demands of their professional roles. Within the context of academic leadership, this capability is particularly important because Heads of Study Programs are expected not only to fulfil administrative and academic responsibilities but also to cultivate effective interpersonal relationships with lecturers, students, university management, and various external stakeholders. Accordingly, emotional intelligence should not be viewed merely as an individual competency but as a critical leadership capability that enables academic leaders to maintain professionalism, emotional stability, and constructive interpersonal relationships across a wide range of challenging workplace situations.

These findings can be interpreted through the Ability Model of Emotional Intelligence (Mayer et al., 2016), which conceptualises emotional intelligence as a set of cognitive abilities involving the perception, understanding, utilisation, and regulation of emotions. According to this model, individuals with higher emotional intelligence are more capable of selecting adaptive emotion regulation strategies when faced with emotionally demanding situations. Rather than reacting impulsively to workplace pressures, they can recognise emotional cues, regulate their own emotional responses, and respond in ways that facilitate effective interpersonal interactions. Within academic leadership, these abilities become increasingly important because Heads of Study Programs are expected to demonstrate composure, empathy, fairness, and professionalism despite operating in environments characterised by high workloads, competing institutional priorities, and continuous organisational change. Consequently, emotional intelligence serves as a fundamental psychological resource that enables academic leaders to perform emotional labour more effectively.

The institutional context of this study provides further insight into this relationship. Heads of Study Programs at relatively young Muhammadiyah universities operate within institutions that continue to strengthen their governance systems, quality assurance

mechanisms, and organizational capacity. As a result, they are required to manage a broad range of responsibilities, including curriculum implementation, accreditation compliance, human resource development, and the achievement of institutional performance targets. These responsibilities necessitate continuous interaction with individuals and groups who possess diverse expectations, interests, and professional backgrounds. Under such circumstances, the ability to regulate personal emotions, understand the emotional states of others, and display appropriate emotional responses becomes essential for maintaining leadership effectiveness and fostering a positive organizational climate. Therefore, academic leaders with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to engage in emotional labor successfully than those with less developed emotion regulation capabilities.

The present findings are consistent with previous empirical research. Han et al. (2022), reported that emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in enabling academics to manage emotional demands through more adaptive emotional labor strategies. Similarly, (Buzova et al., 2023) found that individuals with higher emotional intelligence are better able to regulate their emotional expressions, thereby maintaining positive interpersonal relationships in the workplace. Knežević et al. demonstrated that emotional intelligence enhances individuals' capacity to align their emotional expressions with organizational expectations without generating excessive psychological strain (Knežević et al., 2021). Collectively, these studies support the proposition that emotional intelligence facilitates more effective emotion regulation in professional settings. Nevertheless, most previous investigations have focused on lecturers, service employees, or business professionals. By contrast, the present study extends this body of knowledge by demonstrating that the positive relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional labor also applies to Heads of Study Programs, a group of middle-level academic leaders whose managerial responsibilities and leadership demands differ substantially from those of other occupational groups.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings reinforce the view that emotional intelligence represents an essential psychological resource that facilitates effective emotion regulation within the workplace. More importantly, this study extends the application of the Ability Model of Emotional Intelligence by demonstrating that emotional intelligence contributes not only to interpersonal effectiveness but also to the development of more adaptive emotional labor strategies among academic leaders. This finding broadens the contextual applicability of emotional intelligence theory by providing empirical evidence from higher education leadership in developing-country universities, where organizational complexity and leadership demands continue to evolve.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that universities should recognize emotional intelligence as a strategic leadership competency rather than merely an individual characteristic. Accordingly, higher education institutions should integrate emotional intelligence development into leadership development initiatives by providing training in emotion regulation, interpersonal communication, conflict management, empathetic leadership, and self-awareness. Such initiatives are expected to strengthen the capacity of Heads of Study Programs to cope with the emotional demands of academic leadership while fostering healthier, more collaborative, and more sustainable working environments that ultimately support institutional effectiveness.

The subsequent finding highlights the importance of emotional labor as a psychological mechanism underlying work-related burnout among Heads of Study Programs. The empirical results indicate that emotional labor has a significant positive effect on work-related burnout among Heads of Study Programs at Muhammadiyah universities in Indonesia.

This finding suggests that the greater the expectation for academic leaders to regulate, suppress, or modify their emotional expressions to conform to organizational expectations, the greater their susceptibility to work-related burnout. Within the context of academic leadership, Heads of Study Programs are expected not only to make sound managerial and academic decisions but also to consistently demonstrate composure, empathy, and emotional support toward lecturers, students, university management, and other stakeholders, even when operating under considerable organizational pressure. The continuous discrepancy between genuinely experienced emotions and those that must be displayed in accordance with professional expectations may generate emotional dissonance, which progressively depletes psychological resources and increases the likelihood of burnout.

These findings can be explained through Emotional Labor Theory, originally proposed by (Hochschild Arlie, 1983) and further developed by (Grandey and Melloy, 2017), which argues that employees frequently regulate their emotional expressions to comply with organizational display rules. According to this perspective, the strategy of surface acting, whereby individuals display emotions that do not genuinely reflect their internal emotional state, is particularly taxing because it requires the continuous suppression or modification of authentic feelings. Such emotional regulation creates psychological tension and accelerates the depletion of emotional resources. In contrast, deep acting enables individuals to modify their internal emotional state so that it becomes more congruent with the emotions they are expected to express, thereby reducing emotional dissonance and lowering the risk of burnout (Grandey & Melloy, 2017). Accordingly, the present findings suggest that burnout is influenced not only by the intensity of emotional demands but also by the emotion regulation strategies individuals employ in responding to those demands.

The institutional context examined in this study provides additional insight into this relationship. As academic leaders, Heads of Study Programs occupy positions that require them to balance institutional performance objectives with maintaining positive interpersonal relationships. They are simultaneously responsible for resolving conflicts among lecturers, responding to students' concerns, fulfilling expectations from university management, and ensuring compliance with academic quality standards. These diverse responsibilities frequently require them to display emotions consistent with organizational expectations, even when those expressions differ from their genuine feelings. When such conditions persist over an extended period without sufficient organizational support, the cumulative emotional burden is likely to intensify psychological exhaustion and ultimately develop into work-related burnout.

The present findings are consistent with previous empirical evidence. A meta-analysis conducted by (Yin et al., 2023), demonstrated that emotional labor, particularly surface acting, is strongly associated with burnout across a wide range of occupational settings. Similarly, (Han et al., 2022) reported that academics who relied more frequently on surface acting experienced significantly higher levels of emotional exhaustion than those who predominantly adopted deep acting strategies. (Jeung and Chang, 2021), likewise found that high emotional labor demands substantially increased burnout, particularly when organizations failed to provide adequate psychological support. Collectively, these studies suggest that ineffective emotion regulation represents a critical pathway through which emotional labor contributes to burnout. Nevertheless, previous studies have largely focused on service employees, healthcare professionals, or lecturers. The present study extends this literature by demonstrating that the positive relationship between emotional labor and work-related burnout also applies to Heads of Study Programs, a group of middle-level academic leaders who must simultaneously

manage emotional demands while performing strategic leadership responsibilities within higher education institutions.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings reinforce the proposition that emotional labor constitutes a key psychological mechanism through which emotional demands in the workplace evolve into burnout. More importantly, this study extends the application of Emotional Labor Theory within the context of academic leadership by demonstrating that leaders' ability to cope with emotional demands is shaped not only by individual emotional competencies but also by the characteristics of their work roles and the level of organizational support available to them. This finding broadens the contextual applicability of Emotional Labor Theory by providing empirical evidence from middle-level academic leaders working in developing-country higher education institutions.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that universities should adopt organizational strategies that help academic leaders manage emotional demands in healthier and more sustainable ways. Such initiatives may include providing training in emotion regulation, offering professional counseling services, strengthening social support networks, and cultivating an organizational culture that promotes open communication, psychological safety, and employee well-being. By implementing these interventions, higher education institutions can reduce the risk of work-related burnout among Heads of Study Programs while simultaneously enhancing leadership effectiveness, organizational resilience, and the long-term sustainability of institutional performance.

The next finding concerns the moderating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between job demands and work-related burnout. Contrary to the proposed hypothesis, the findings reveal that self-efficacy does not significantly moderate the relationship between job demands and work-related burnout among Heads of Study Programs at Muhammadiyah universities in Indonesia. This result suggests that confidence in one's ability to perform work-related tasks successfully is insufficient to buffer the detrimental effects of excessive job demands on burnout. In other words, even academic leaders who possess high levels of self-efficacy remain vulnerable to work-related burnout when they are continuously exposed to persistent organizational demands that exceed the resources available to cope with them.

These findings can be interpreted through the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Theory, which proposes that burnout develops when job demands consistently exceed the personal and organizational resources available to employees (Bakker et al., 2023). Within the JD-R framework, self-efficacy is conceptualized as an important personal resource that enhances individuals' confidence in managing challenging work situations. However, the protective value of self-efficacy is not unconditional. Its effectiveness depends largely on the nature, intensity, and duration of job demands, as well as the availability of organizational resources that enable individuals to perform their roles effectively. When organizational demands become chronic, multidimensional, and increasingly complex, personal psychological resources alone may no longer be sufficient to prevent the health impairment process that ultimately leads to burnout. Accordingly, the present findings suggest that work-related burnout among Heads of Study Programs is influenced more strongly by structural and organizational characteristics than by individual beliefs regarding personal capability.

The organizational context of this study provides further insight into the absence of the moderating effect. Heads of Study Programs at relatively young Muhammadiyah universities are required to manage responsibilities that extend beyond conventional academic leadership. They are expected to oversee accreditation processes, improve academic quality, achieve institutional performance indicators, coordinate curriculum development, supervise

human resource management, and ensure compliance with increasingly complex regulatory requirements, often under conditions of limited organizational support. These responsibilities create a work environment in which stress originates primarily from structural and institutional pressures rather than from deficiencies in individual capability. Consequently, even leaders with strong self-efficacy may experience burnout when organizational systems fail to provide adequate administrative support, balanced workload allocation, effective leadership, and sufficient institutional resources.

The present findings differ from several previous studies that identified self-efficacy as a protective factor capable of reducing or moderating the relationship between work stress and burnout (Consiglio et al., 2023). One possible explanation for this inconsistency lies in differences in occupational context and respondent characteristics. Most earlier studies were conducted among healthcare professionals, school teachers, or employees working in relatively stable organizational environments. In contrast, the present study focuses on Heads of Study Programs serving in developing private universities characterized by continuous institutional transformation and increasing organizational demands. Conversely, the findings are consistent with more recent evidence suggesting that personal resources do not always protect employees from burnout when organizational demands become excessively high or when organizational support is insufficient (Bakker et al., 2023). Collectively, these findings imply that the protective function of self-efficacy is context-dependent and may diminish under conditions where organizational pressures substantially outweigh available resources.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the growing body of literature by demonstrating that self-efficacy does not invariably function as a moderator in the relationship between job demands and work-related burnout. This finding refines the application of the Job Demands–Resources Theory by suggesting that the effectiveness of personal resources is contingent upon organizational conditions. Specifically, the buffering role of self-efficacy appears to weaken when organizational demands become overwhelmingly dominant and are not accompanied by sufficient structural or institutional support. Consequently, the findings highlight the importance of adopting a more contextual perspective when examining the role of personal resources in preventing burnout among academic leaders.

From a practical perspective, the findings indicate that efforts to reduce burnout among Heads of Study Programs should not rely solely on interventions designed to enhance self-efficacy, such as motivational programs or individual leadership development initiatives. Instead, universities should simultaneously strengthen organizational resources by improving administrative support, redistributing managerial responsibilities more equitably, simplifying bureaucratic and accreditation procedures, reinforcing quality assurance systems, and enhancing leadership support at both faculty and university levels. By addressing the structural sources of occupational stress alongside individual capacity development, higher education institutions are more likely to establish sustainable strategies for preventing burnout and promoting the long-term effectiveness of academic leadership.

The final finding extends the preceding discussion by examining whether emotional labor functions as the underlying psychological mechanism linking emotional intelligence to work-related burnout among Heads of Study Programs. The empirical results indicate that emotional labor significantly mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and work-related burnout among Heads of Study Programs at Muhammadiyah universities in Indonesia. This finding suggests that emotional intelligence does not reduce burnout directly; rather, its protective effect operates through individuals' ability to regulate and manage their

emotional expressions in response to workplace demands. In other words, academic leaders with higher levels of emotional intelligence are more likely to adopt adaptive emotion regulation strategies when performing their leadership responsibilities. These strategies enable them to cope more effectively with the emotional challenges inherent in academic leadership, thereby reducing their vulnerability to work-related burnout.

These findings can be interpreted by integrating the Ability Model of Emotional Intelligence (Mayer et al., 2016) with Emotional Labor Theory (Grandey & Melloy, 2017). According to the Ability Model, emotionally intelligent individuals possess the cognitive abilities required to perceive, understand, utilize, and regulate emotions effectively. These competencies provide the psychological foundation for selecting more adaptive emotional labor strategies, particularly deep acting, which involves aligning one's internal emotional state with the emotional expressions required by the work role. By contrast, individuals with lower emotional intelligence are more likely to rely on surface acting, whereby displayed emotions differ from genuinely experienced feelings. Prolonged reliance on surface acting may generate emotional dissonance a discrepancy between experienced and expressed emotions—which progressively depletes psychological resources, increases emotional exhaustion, and ultimately contributes to work-related burnout. Accordingly, the findings suggest that emotional intelligence protects academic leaders from burnout not because it directly eliminates emotional demands, but because it enables them to regulate those demands through healthier and more adaptive emotional labor strategies.

The organizational context of this study provides further insight into this mediating mechanism. Heads of Study Programs occupy leadership positions that require continuous interaction with lecturers, students, university administrators, professional staff, and external stakeholders. In fulfilling these diverse responsibilities, they are expected to demonstrate professionalism, empathy, emotional composure, and effective interpersonal communication, even when confronted with interpersonal conflict, administrative pressures, and demanding institutional performance expectations. Under such circumstances, successful emotional management depends not only on possessing high emotional intelligence but also on the ability to translate that emotional competence into appropriate emotional labor strategies that fit specific workplace situations. Consequently, emotional labor represents the critical psychological process through which emotional intelligence influences the level of work-related burnout experienced by academic leaders.

The present findings are consistent with previous empirical evidence. (Han et al., 2022), reported that academics with higher emotional intelligence were more likely to employ adaptive emotion regulation strategies, resulting in lower levels of burnout. Similarly, (Hong and Lee, 2016), demonstrated that emotional intelligence plays a pivotal role in enhancing the effectiveness of emotional labor while reducing the adverse consequences of emotional demands on psychological well-being. More recently, (Geng et al., 2025) found that effective emotion regulation contributes to professional well-being through the adoption of more adaptive emotional labor strategies. Collectively, these studies support the proposition that emotional labor constitutes an important mechanism through which emotional intelligence influences employees' psychological outcomes. Nevertheless, previous research has primarily focused on lecturers, healthcare professionals, or service employees. The present study extends this literature by demonstrating that the mediating role of emotional labor also applies to Heads of Study Programs, a group of middle-level academic leaders who simultaneously navigate academic, administrative, and strategic leadership responsibilities within higher education institutions.

From a theoretical perspective, this study makes an important contribution by demonstrating that emotional labor serves as the primary psychological mechanism linking emotional intelligence to work-related burnout. The findings extend the application of both the Ability Model of Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Labor Theory within the context of academic leadership while simultaneously enriching the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Theory. Specifically, the results suggest that personal psychological resources do not necessarily reduce burnout through a direct pathway; instead, their protective influence operates through emotion regulation processes manifested in adaptive emotional labor strategies. This integrated perspective provides a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological processes underlying work-related burnout among academic leaders. It highlights the importance of considering both personal competencies and behavioral regulation mechanisms when explaining burnout in higher education leadership.

From a practical perspective, the findings indicate that enhancing emotional intelligence alone may not be sufficient to reduce burnout unless academic leaders are also equipped with the skills required to implement adaptive emotional labour strategies. Accordingly, universities should integrate emotional intelligence development with training programmes focusing on emotion regulation, interpersonal communication, conflict management, empathetic leadership, and reflective leadership practices. In addition, providing leadership coaching, professional counselling services, peer support mechanisms, and sustained organisational support can strengthen the capacity of Heads of Study Programs to manage emotional demands more effectively. Such integrated interventions are expected to minimise the risk of work-related burnout while promoting sustainable academic leadership, psychological well-being, and long-term institutional effectiveness.

CONCLUSIONS

This study provides a deeper understanding of work-related burnout among Heads of Study Programs at relatively young Muhammadiyah universities in Indonesia by integrating organizational demands, personal resources, and emotional regulation processes. Rather than viewing burnout solely as an individual problem, the findings indicate that it emerges from the interplay between demanding organizational conditions and how academic leaders manage the emotional requirements of their roles. Emotional labor represents an important psychological mechanism linking emotional intelligence to burnout, while self-efficacy alone appears insufficient to protect academic leaders when job demands remain substantial. These findings extend the application of the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) framework to middle-level academic leadership and highlight the importance of considering both organizational and psychological mechanisms in understanding burnout. Practically, universities should not rely solely on individual resilience or coping strategies to prevent burnout. Organizational interventions should include more balanced workload allocation, stronger administrative support, streamlined bureaucratic processes, emotional intelligence and emotion-regulation development, and accessible psychological support to create healthier working conditions while sustaining leadership effectiveness and institutional performance.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional design limits causal interpretation, as all variables were measured at a single point in time; therefore, future studies should employ longitudinal designs to examine how job demands and psychological resources influence burnout over time. Second, the reliance on self-reported questionnaire

data may introduce perceptual, social desirability, and common method biases despite the anonymity and confidentiality provided to respondents. Future research could incorporate multiple data sources, such as institutional workload records or assessments from other organizational members. Third, the study was restricted to Heads of Study Programs at Muhammadiyah universities in Indonesia established for less than ten years, limiting the generalizability of the findings to older universities, public institutions, other private universities, and different cultural contexts. Future studies could conduct comparative research across institutional types and countries. Finally, the model included only selected organizational and psychological factors, while other potentially relevant demands and resources, such as organizational support, role conflict, autonomy, leadership support, and work–family conflict, were not examined. Despite these limitations, the study demonstrates that sustainable academic leadership requires a balance between organizational demands and adequate personal and organizational resources, suggesting that universities should move beyond exclusively individual-focused interventions toward organizational practices that foster more supportive and sustainable working conditions for academic leaders.

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