

An Evaluation of the Athlete Leadership Development Program at National University

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Abstract

This study examined athletic leadership development programs at National University (NU), evaluating implementation, effectiveness, challenges, and improvement opportunities. Employing a mixed-methods design, the research collected quantitative and qualitative data via questionnaires and interviews with varsity athletes. Four guiding questions framed the inquiry: which leadership programs are implemented; what leadership roles and skills are developed; what challenges athletes encounter; and what improvements are appropriate. Results indicate NU provides a comprehensive program emphasizing core competencies, communication, decision-making, and conflict resolution with communication most prominently stressed. Delivery methods combine group coaching, one-on-one mentoring, leadership workshops, and experiential learning such as team drills, aiming to build individual leadership capacity and strengthen team cohesion. Despite these strengths, participants reported implementation challenges. Athletes described difficulty balancing academic, athletic, and leadership commitments, leading to fatigue and stress. They also noted the program's rigid scheduling, insufficient emotional and psychological support, and overly academic content that lacked practical application. To address these gaps, the study proposes the NU Athlete Leadership Development Program (NALDP), a four-year, cohort-based model that begins with emotional intelligence training and advances to strategic leadership development. NALDP integrates leadership camps, reflective journaling, scenario-based simulations, and continuous assessment through peer evaluations and leadership portfolios. Designed to be adaptive and experiential, the program aligns with athletes' schedules and real-life contexts, fostering sustained leadership growth at both individual and team levels. Implementation of NALDP should include stakeholder consultation, flexible scheduling, and integrated mental health resources; pilot testing and iterative evaluation will ensure relevance, feasibility, and measurable impact on athlete leadership outcomes.

Keywords: athlete leadership, varsity athletes, leadership development, experiential learning, mixed methods

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Introduction

The governance of sports plays a crucial role in fostering leadership by establishing frameworks that prioritize values, ethical practices, and opportunities for development. Through programs initiated by sports governing bodies, such as coach certifications and athlete mentorship initiatives, leadership training is embedded into the fabric of athletic development. These programs emphasize essential leadership skills like communication, conflict resolution, and ethical decision-making, preparing individuals to guide teams effectively. Governance also ensures inclusivity in leadership roles by promoting representation across diverse genders, cultural backgrounds, and age groups, enriching the quality of leadership within sports teams and organizations.

Effective sports governance not only nurtures individual leadership qualities but also creates environments where team dynamics and collective leadership could thrive. According to Cotterill (2016), leadership is the cornerstone of team success, enhancing cohesion, communication, and overall performance. By embedding ethical principles and equitable practices into decision-making processes, governance supports leaders in fostering trust, collaboration, and a culture of shared responsibility. This synergy between governance and leadership development drives the evolution of sports as a platform for personal growth, team excellence, and community impact. The importance of athletic leadership extends beyond the confines of the sports arena. As Day and Dragoni (2015) point out, leadership development in sports could have far-reaching implications, influencing not only the success of athletic programs but also the personal growth and future career trajectories of student-athletes. By instilling leadership qualities such as resilience, responsibility, and strategic thinking, sports programs can equip athletes with skills that are transferable to various aspects of life. In this regard, the development of leadership within athletic programs is not just a matter of competitive success but also a vital component of holistic athlete development.

In recent years, National University (NU) has emerged as a dominant force in collegiate sports, consistently achieving top rankings and demonstrating a robust winning culture across various leagues. According to reports published on the NU website, varsity athletes have excelled in competitions such as UAAP Season 86 and other national tournaments, securing gold medals and podium finishes across various sports. This success is not solely attributed to the athletic prowess of the athletes but also to the university's commitment to comprehensive sports leadership development programs. These programs are designed to foster leadership qualities among athletes, thereby enhancing team cohesion and overall performance.

The development of leadership at National University (NU) has been integral to its mission of cultivating well-rounded individuals equipped to excel in their academic and professional pursuits. Founded in 1900 as Colegio Filipino, the institution has evolved through the years to prioritize leadership as a key aspect of its educational philosophy. Leadership initiatives have been embedded in both academic and extracurricular programs, fostering a culture of engagement and mentorship among students, faculty, and staff. NU's transformative partnership with the SM Group in 2008 marked a turning point, enabling significant advancements in infrastructure, student-centered policies, and leadership training. These efforts reflect NU's commitment to producing graduates who are not only skilled in their fields but also capable of driving meaningful change in their communities.

NU employs innovative strategies to promote leadership development and to ensure its integration into all aspects of university life. By emphasizing practical learning experiences

such as leadership workshops, collaborative projects, and community service, NU provides students and faculty with opportunities to build essential skills like communication, teamwork, and strategic thinking. The NU Leadership Development Program (NU LDP) exemplifies this focus, offering comprehensive training designed to nurture ethical and socially responsible leaders. Marketing strategies highlight the university's modern facilities, academic achievements, and leadership opportunities, positioning NU as a top choice for students seeking holistic growth. Through a combination of strategic planning and leadership-focused initiatives, NU continues to empower individuals and solidify its role as a leader in higher education and leadership development in the Philippines.

While athletic leadership development programs are integral to cultivating student-athlete leaders, there is limited research specifically evaluating the effectiveness of such programs at the collegiate level, particularly within the context of Philippine universities. Studies on leadership development in athletics often focus on professional or international settings, with insufficient attention to local contexts like the National University. Additionally, existing evaluations tend to emphasize the immediate impact on athletic performance or team dynamics, but few investigate how these programs contribute to the holistic development of leadership skills, both on and off the field.

A literature on athletic leadership development in the Philippine context is largely nonexistent (at the college level, especially the likes of NU at the very least). Professional or international sports have been the focus of most studies and hardly any attention has been given to the local level, through which holistic leadership development is established beyond the playing field. Only few accounts have been made on the cultural and institutional demands of Filipino student-body athletes in a context of tiptoeing between sports, academics, and leadership, resulting in a scant vision of distal outcomes such as career readiness and personal improvement. Another lacuna is in making leadership programs sustainable, and accessible to all students, but particularly for those from historically excluded communities. Attention should be given to this area to make sure that programs that are available to all students to provide long term experience.

Moreover, little is known about how athletic leadership programs address specific cultural and institutional challenges faced by student-athletes in the Philippines, including balancing academic, athletic, and leadership responsibilities. There is also a lack of comprehensive data on the long-term outcomes of these programs, such as their influence on career success, personal growth, and community involvement.

Despite the robust initiatives in leadership development at National University (NU), one challenge lies in ensuring the sustainability and scalability of its leadership programs across all student demographics. While programs like the NU Leadership Development Program (NU LDP) provide valuable training and mentorship, some students, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds or with limited time due to academic and financial pressures, face difficulties accessing these opportunities. This disparity could hinder the university's goal of cultivating leadership qualities equitably among all its students. Addressing this issue requires enhancing the accessibility of leadership programs by introducing flexible formats, such as online modules or hybrid workshops, and increasing awareness and support through targeted outreach initiatives. By tackling these barriers, NU can ensure that its leadership initiatives reach a broader audience, fostering a more inclusive environment where all students have equal opportunities to develop and excel as future leaders.

The NALDP is a key component of the NU sports development program under the university's overall sports management headed but the sports director. Incorporating leadership development within its athletic governance, the initiative reaffirms the university's pledge to developing student-athletes as leaders on the field and court, in the classroom and in the community. Such alignment ensures that student-athletes will acquire core skills in communication, decision making, and conflict resolution, within ethical frameworks and through commitments to values which are consistent with the educational mission at NU. The school recognizes this union of sports success and leadership is positive for the school, students and wider community, as it helps to develop a culture of sports success as part of a well-rounded development. This provides more opportunities for students to be challenged in their personal and professional development and be ready to lead not exclusive of their higher education.

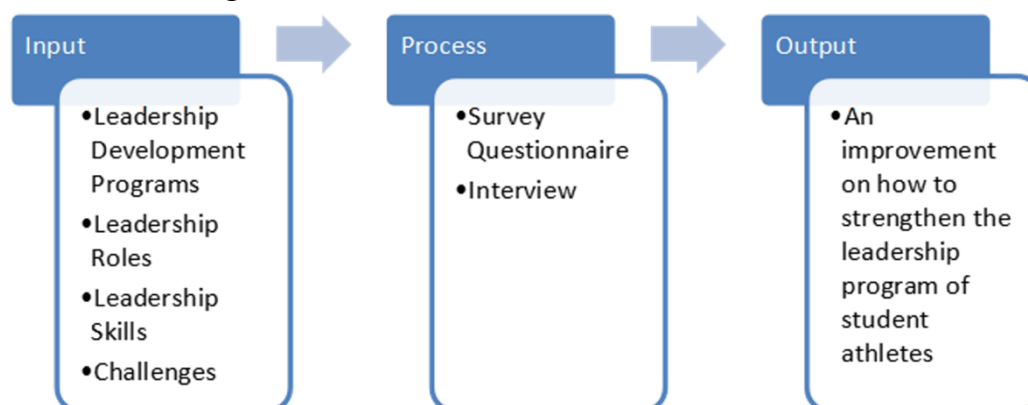
In a parallel stroke, the program plays into NU's branding of the University itself, allowing prospective students to see how sports attract interest and attendance at the school. But even completely successful athletic programs, like that supported by a leadership development program, will entice prospective enrollees by touting NU's dominance in competitions as well as the university's well-rounded support of student-athletes. All this success adds up to more overall school reputation, increased community pride, and a greater lure for incoming students who now see NU as a place where sports and leadership intersect. Despite this, the paper suggests that there are issues in maintaining and enabling such initiatives, from resource shortfalls to issues of access, which prevent NU from reaching its full athletic potential. These gaps need to be addressed if NU athletics program's support issue is to be resolved, and if the development of sports is to be maximized, not just for sports advancement, but also for student development, long-term play strategies, and for the long-term sustainability of the institution.

Despite efforts of such undertakings, a gap still exists in determining the effectiveness of athletic leadership programs in Philippine universities, specifically in the case of NU. Most extant studies centered on professional or international sports, ignoring the challenges and experiences of Filipino student-athletes as they juggle their academics with their athletic training and leadership. Comparatively, little is known also about the long-range effects of such programs and what role are they play in preparing students for careers, or in providing students with a wide-view of the world, or in impacting the community. With this gap in mind, this study aims to offer evidence-based contributions that will not only enhance the athlete leadership development at NU but can also be followed as a model for other universities who intend to combine sport governance and leadership training gaps.

This study aimed to evaluate the athletic leadership development programs at NU. By identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the current initiatives, this research sought to provide actionable insights that could support the expansion of NU's sports programs nationwide. Additionally, this study holds significance for other NU campuses, which could adopt best practices from NU to enhance their athletic success. The findings are expected to contribute to the field of sports leadership by offering a model for effective leadership development in collegiate sports, thereby supporting the academic and athletic development goals of the university.

Research Paradigm

Figure 1
Research Paradigm



The research paradigm presents an input-process-output research model. In the input component, the study focuses on leadership development programs, which are designed to enhance leadership skills and competencies among individuals or groups. These programs can vary in terms of their structure, content, and delivery methods. Different leadership roles within these programs were examined, such as team leaders, project managers, or mentors. This helps to understand how leadership development programs address specific leadership roles and their associated responsibilities. The research analyzed the development of various leadership skills through the programs, including communication, decision-making, problem-solving, conflict resolution, and teamwork. These skills are essential for effective leadership and could be fostered through targeted leadership development initiatives.

For the process component, the study employed both survey instruments and interviews to gather comprehensive data on participants' experiences and perceptions. The surveys provided quantifiable insights, while the interviews offered in-depth qualitative information that enriched the overall analysis.

The output, the study focuses on contextualizing an improvement program aimed at enhancing team cohesion and performance. It assessed the impact of these programs on team cohesion, defined as the degree to which members work together effectively and cooperatively, a factor closely associated with improved performance and satisfaction. The study also evaluated the relationship between leadership development programs and team performance, examining metrics such as productivity, quality, and innovation. Ultimately, the research sought to determine whether participation in these programs leads to measurable improvements in team performance outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to evaluate the athletic leadership development programs at NU, with a focus on understanding their impact on team cohesion and performance.

Specifically, this study inquired on the following questions:

1. What are the leadership development programs implemented at NU in fostering leadership qualities among varsity athletes?
2. How could these leadership development programs of NU be described in terms of

- a. leadership roles; and
 - b. leadership skills?
3. What are the challenges encountered by athletes in the leadership development program of NU?
 4. What improvement program may be proposed to strengthen the leadership development program of NU?

The relationship and patterns within the literature on athletic leadership development emphasize the critical role of structured programs in nurturing essential leadership qualities in athletes. These programs are designed to enhance skills like communication, decision-making, and emotional intelligence, which are crucial in complex environments such as sports teams (Machida-Kosuga & Kohno, 2022). A common thread throughout the studies is the focus on self-awareness, collaboration, and experiential learning as key components that contribute to the athletes' personal growth and improved team dynamics (Dugan & Komives, 2021). Many studies reveal that leadership development in sports not only improves the athletes' self-confidence and interpersonal skills but also leads to better organizational outcomes (Bengtsson et al., 2024). Furthermore, emerging evidence indicates that athlete-centered leadership and development programs contribute substantially to the enhancement of key psychosocial competencies, including the cultivation of resilience (Bates et al., 2024), the improvement of time-management capacities (Lamban et al., 2025), and the strengthening of conflict-resolution skills that are foundational to effective functioning within team-based athletic environments (Sports Conflict Institute, 2023).

However, challenges also emerge from the literature, including the need for programs to be culturally sensitive and sustainable. Some studies indicate that existing leadership programs often focus too heavily on individual leadership roles, rather than fostering a collaborative leadership culture (Sutherland et al., 2022). This is where research on shared leadership models, which promote cohesion and trust within teams, becomes relevant. Studies by Cotterill et al. (2022) highlight the importance of both formal and informal leadership in driving team success. Research consistently emphasizes that athlete leadership development, whether through formal roles like captains or informal peer leadership, enhances both team performance and individual well-being.

Coaches are also consistently identified as essential figures in the leadership development process, providing both reactive and proactive leadership that fosters unity, addresses team issues, and sets goals (Peak Consulting Group, 2023). Leadership programs that prioritize personal growth and emotional management have been found to be particularly effective, as they prepare athletes to navigate the emotional challenges of leadership (Machida-Kosuga & Kohno, 2022). Studies in various sports, including cricket and high school sports, demonstrate the positive impact of such programs on both personal development and team cohesion (Cotterill, 2016).

Research consistently highlights that multiple leadership roles within sport teams—including captains, coaches, peer leaders, and other positional leaders—are essential for maintaining discipline, facilitating strategic execution, and sustaining team morale, with captains and coaches providing direct motivational and strategic guidance, and peer or informal leaders contributing significantly to communication, cohesion, and influence within the group (ME-QR Sports Leadership Article, 2023; iResearchNet Sports Leadership Analysis, n.d.; Sports Psychology Teaching Notes, n.d.).

In summary, while athletic leadership programs are widely acknowledged as essential for enhancing both team performance and individual well-being, the literature calls for a more standardized, culturally sensitive approach to leadership development. There is a need for programs to address not only the personal growth of athletes but also the broader team dynamics, ensuring sustainable leadership development across diverse sporting contexts (Cotterill, 2016).

This comprehensive understanding of leadership development can inform future interventions, ensuring that athletes at all levels have the opportunity to develop into wellrounded, effective leaders.

Methodology

This study aimed to evaluate the sports leadership development programs of the National University. To achieve this, a convergent mixed-method design was employed. Researcher uses the mixed methods to expand and improve the analytical power of their studies (Sandelowski M., 2000). Mixed methods research combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to address complex research questions (Sharma et al., 2023). The convergent design involves collecting and analyzing both data types concurrently (Mavodza, 2022). This design is particularly effective for exploring multifaceted research problems that cannot be fully addressed using a single approach (Sharma et al., 2023). Using this singlephase approach, the researcher collected both quantitative and qualitative data, analyzed them separately, and compared the results to see if the findings confirmed or dis-confirmed each other.

The information derived from the study utilizing this design provided a better understanding of the leadership roles and leadership skills, enhancement of leadership development programs and its contribution on the improved team cohesion and team performance of the athletes, which are very essential for effective planning a program for them. The respondents of the study were 340 athletes of National University. Simple random sampling method was used to determine the research respondents.

Simple random sampling, often referred to as the “fishbowl” method, is a technique used in research to select a sample from a larger population where every individual has an equal chance of being chosen. This method involves placing all potential participants or items into a container, such as a fishbowl, and randomly drawing them, ensuring that each item or participant is equally likely to be selected without any bias. It is widely used to ensure a representative sample, particularly when researchers aim for unbiased results. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), simple random sampling is an essential approach in research design as it allows for the creation of a sample that is truly representative of the larger population, providing valid and reliable results.

For the survey questionnaire, there were 181 respondents from the population of 340. In order to determine the appropriate sample size for this study, a sample size calculator based on Cochran’s formula was used with the following parameters: a confidence level of 95%, a margin of error of 5%, and a population size of 340. Since the actual population proportion was unknown, the default value of 50% was used, as this represents the most conservative estimate and yields the largest required sample size. Based on these inputs, the calculated sample size was 181. This means that at least 181 responses were necessary to ensure that the results of the study were accurate within $\pm 5\%$ of the true population value, with 95%

confidence. For the interview, 10 participants were interviewed: 5 officials/ coaches/ trainers and 5 varsity athletes were interviewed.

The research respondents involved 340 athletes from the National University. Using a Sampling Calculator based on Cochran's formula, there was 181 varsity players considered as the respondents of the study. Moreover, 10 individuals were purposefully selected to participate in the interview phase of the study. This smaller, qualitative subset was chosen to provide deeper insights and a more nuanced understanding of the topic that could not be fully captured through the survey alone. The 10 participants included 5 players and 5 officials/ coaches/ trainers to ensure a balanced perspective between those directly involved in athletic performance and those responsible for management, support, and decision-making. This purposive sampling approach allowed the researcher to explore key themes with more depth, drawing on the lived experiences and expert viewpoints of both groups while maintaining representation across different roles within the varsity sports community at the National University. The researcher utilized an adapted questionnaire based on sports leadership qualities and leadership roles. The first part of the questionnaire determined the student athlete's leadership programs. The second part of the questionnaire focused on how these programs have affected their leadership qualities and leadership roles.

To support the data of the questionnaire, a focus group interview was used. Semi-structured or open-ended interviews are the most common since they provide the greatest chance to distil the essence of the phenomenon at hand (Padilla-Diaz, 2015). In the leadership questionnaire for roles and qualities, the researcher ensured proper permissions and adhered to validation procedures. Since the items in the questionnaire were adapted from established instruments such as the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Avolio & Bass (2004), and other validated leadership tools, it was essential to seek permission from the original authors or publishers. Even if the items were revised, the researcher still passed the adapted version through a validation process to ensure its reliability and consistency in measuring the intended constructs.

A semi-structured interview anchored the conversation with participants in the main ideas of the research while simultaneously providing a balance between structure and room for more detailed descriptions of their experiences. Follow-up questions were asked during the semi-structured interview to guarantee that the most accurate representation of the participants' actual experiences were recorded (Padilla-Diaz, 2015).

This study used the Likert scale.

Table 1
Likert Scale

Point	Scale	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.215.00	Strongly Agree
4	3.414.20	Agree
3	2.613.40	Neutral
2	1.812.00	Disagree
1	1.001.80	Strongly Disagree

The research was conducted entirely in accordance with ethical considerations to protect the rights and welfare of the participants. The informed consent was completed before the

participants started with the tasks to have them aware of the aim and procedure of the study and to be alert to possible risks. Participation was strictly voluntary, and the right to withdraw was upheld as well as measures to ensure confidentiality, including de-identification of cases and nondisclosure of identities. The research was reviewed and approved by the university's institutional ethics review committee, and precautions were taken to reduce risk. Results were meant to be used only to enhance the athletic leadership development program at National University considering potential negative impacts.

Survey and in-depth interview data were gathered to describe demographic characteristics, experiences, and views related to program effectiveness. All data were stored in encrypted databases, accessible only to staff with permission to use the information. Pseudonyms were given to ensure participant anonymity. File shifting was kept to a minimum to ensure data integrity, and data was disposed of in accordance with appropriate data security policies following shredding or secure electronic deletion after the retention period. These protocols helped to ensure that the data were dealt with ethically and responsibly at all stages of the research.

Statistical Tools

Several statistical tools and procedures were employed to analyze and interpret the data obtained. Frequency distribution was used to organize responses and show how often each value or category occurred in the dataset, typically through tabular presentation. Percentage was applied to express frequencies as proportions of the total sample, allowing clearer comparison across categories using the formula $(\text{part/whole}) \times 100$. Ranking was utilized to arrange items from highest to lowest based on computed frequencies or mean scores, identifying the most prominent responses. The mean was computed as a measure of central tendency by summing all values and dividing by the number of observations, providing an overall average response level. Weighted mean was also used to summarize Likert scale results and determine the extent to which sports development programs were implemented, as well as to assess team cohesion and team performance indicators. Finally, standard deviation was calculated to describe the variability or dispersion of responses around the mean, indicating the consistency of participants' ratings.

Results

The athletic leadership development programs at NU serve as a critical platform for shaping the leadership potential of varsity athletes, as examined through this study. This study explored the athletic leadership development programs at NU with the goal of evaluating their implementation, effectiveness, challenges, and areas for improvement. The following Statements of the Problem (SOPs) guided the investigation.

1. What are the leadership development programs implemented at NU in fostering leadership qualities among varsity athletes?

NU has vast experience implementing a comprehensive Leadership Development Program for Varsity Athletes, particularly in various key competencies such as Communication, decision-making, and Conflict Resolution; throughout these competencies, Communication stands out as the most prioritized. The program is a combination of group coaching, individual mentoring, leadership workshops, and experiential learning (running team drills).

In both cases, these tools are designed to cultivate leadership at the individual level and collective cohesion at the team level.

2. How could these leadership development programs of NU be described in terms of leadership roles and leadership skills?

The program provides student-athletes with specific definitions for leadership roles and real-life experiences to practice such actions on the field, at practice, or in extracurricular activities. Developed skills, such as emotional intelligence, strategic thinking, and interpersonal communication. Learning is reinforced through self-assessment tools and peer feedback mechanisms. The recognized need exists for more sport-specific, scenario-based simulations that help to train professionals under practical pressure.

3. What are the challenges encountered by athletes in the leadership development program of NU?

Athletes reported feeling fatigued and stressed because they were not able to balance their academic lives, their athletic responsibilities, and leadership roles. This was seen by many as an opportunity to expand, but there were also calls for better program delivery. Such challenges included the very academic language of the program, low availability when it came to emotional and psychological support, and inflexible formats, that would work with an athlete's schedule.

4. What improvement program could be proposed to strengthen the leadership development program of NU?

In response to those gaps, the NU Athlete Leadership Development Program (NALDP) is recommended. This is a four-year, cohort-based model that begins with emotional intelligence training and evolves to strategic leadership and high-performance simulations. It combines reflective journaling with leadership camps and ongoing assessment (e.g., portfolios, peer evaluations). The NALDP is challenging yet fully experiential, an adaptive experience that resonates with the playing context of student-athletes through play-based interactions to enhance individual leadership development and team performance.

Conclusion

This research highlights how important leadership development programs to be structured and intentional for varsity athlete leaders at NU. The present model shows a very good fundamental support: close fields of competency (ability to communicate, take decisions and solve problems). Still, as much as the program itself is complete and all-encompassing in design, in practice there seems to be somewhat of a void between theory and sport-applicable Tenets.

One key finding of this study is that leadership cannot be isolated from the athletic and academic experiences of student-athletes, thus listing a call for shared governance to address these issues. The demands of the multifaceted roles in school, sports, and leadership lay bare the inadequacies of traditional training as it is traditionally taught. Instead, this speaks to a compelling imperative: redesigning the program more athlete-centered around the embedded cognitive, emotional and social components present in student-athletes.

Additionally, although participants mainly felt that they could assume leadership of their respective nodes with confidence, the absence of immersive simulations and role-playing indicates the need to supplement basic training with contextualized practice. Emotional intelligence and mental resilience have been highlighted for further development, indicating that leadership programs should focus not just on role description and procedure tasks but also inner dimensions of leadership: self-regulation, stress management and interpersonal sensitivity.

This study finds, therefore, that NU's leadership training model serves as a solid foundation for effective leadership, but has potential to be further developed and to raise the ranks of longterm efficacy. A promising model to develop such leadership is proposed in the NU Athlete Leadership Development Program (NALPD). The way that its development considers self-knowledge and reputation as well of the kind, adaptable case-study approach showcases a response to the changing high education world. To the extent that the program is implemented with fidelity, the NALDP has potential to heighten overall team culture, improve emotional well-being, and enhance both athletic and academic pursuit of excellence as it enhances individual student leadership capacity.

Recommendations

In light of the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were drawn:

1. The university needs to toughen up on its leadership development with performance level activities and role-plays set in extreme conditions. Such activities will help athletes to literally practice resolution and decision-making during high-pressure situations, thereby keeping training practical and sport-specific.
2. Modules including emotional intelligence, stress and resilience management, may be incorporated into the curriculum. The resources will aid athletes in dealing with the pressure of academics and athletics and enhancing teamwork, flexibility, and collaboration abilities.
3. Because of time constraints, programme design must be flexible and sport-specific. By providing a mix and match of modalities (e.g. async and selfpaced) will help meet the needs of athletes who have very busy training and competition schedules.
4. The plan of action should include a focus on the involvement of the athletes, reflection, and communication. This involves the implementation of unattributed feedback systems, peer-mentoring and reflective diaries, followed by the introduction of interpersonal communication and conflict resolution training targeting specific issues that emerge from the interviews.
5. The long term impact of athletic leadership development programs beyond the university context needs to be explored in future studies. Longitudinal data collection with NU graduates followed up and their professional and civic achievements could be an excellent means to tracking NUSL turkeys. Further, comparative and longitudinal studies can help provide indicators about how leadership competencies of turkeys might be maintained over time, and contrast between athlete-student leaders and non-athlete-student leaders.
6. Considering the scope and limitations of the present evaluation, the researcher recommend that future research should be directed at investigating long-term effects of athlete leadership development programs in post-university life.
 - a. This may involve monitoring NU alumni to determine the impact of the leadership program on their professional lives, civic involvement, and subsequent sport leadership participation.

- b. Longitudinal studies of this nature would enhance understanding of the extent to which these leadership skills are sustained and applied in practice.
- c. Future studies may also explore a comparison between varsity athletes and non-athlete student leaders to identify contrasts in leadership development achievements, concerns, and desired training strategies.

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Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

The author utilized several AI-assisted tools to support data analysis and manuscript preparation. SPSS Statistics v.28 was used for data coding and statistical computations, including descriptive and inferential analyses. NVivo facilitated the organization, coding, and thematic analysis of qualitative data. Grammarly assisted in improving grammar, clarity, and overall writing quality, while QuillBot was used selectively to enhance phrasing and ensure clarity and conciseness. An AI content checker helped verify the authenticity of the work, ensuring that AI-generated elements did not compromise originality. Finally, plagiarism detection software such as Turnitin or Grammarly Plagiarism Checker was employed to confirm proper citation, ensure academic integrity, and minimize similarity.

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