



The Moderating Role of Distress Tolerance in the Relationship Between Social Connectedness and Burnout Among Filipino Young Adult Professionals

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ABSTRACT

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Burnout is a phenomenon often experienced due to workplace stress. Current literature discusses how work-related burnout affects one's psychological wellbeing that leads to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, reduced personal accomplishment, anxiety and depression. This research utilized a cross-sectional predictive design with moderation analysis and investigated the relationship between burnout, social connectedness, and distress tolerance. Findings revealed that young adult professionals experience high levels of burnout, high levels of social connectedness and moderate levels of distress tolerance. Moderation analysis revealed that the relationship between social connectedness and burnout does not fully depend on levels of distress tolerance. However, post hoc multiple regression analysis showed that social connectedness and distress tolerance significantly predicts levels of burnout. Overall, this study emphasized the importance of Social connectedness and distress tolerance as significant protective factors against burnout. Thus, fostering supportive social environments in the workplace and developing emotional coping resources help reduce burnout and enhance well-being among young adult professionals.

KEYWORDS:

Workplace stress, psychological well-being, social environments, emotional coping, Quantitative research

1. INTRODUCTION

Workplace wellbeing is becoming widely acknowledged due to the interplay of various factors such as the increase of mental health cases, the passage of the Philippine Mental Health Act, the rise of environmental and social issues, and changes in global occupational standards. One of the pressing concerns that young adult professionals experience is burnout. It affects one's performance, and personal and professional wellbeing (Mobarak, 2024). It has been noted that the Philippines ranked highest as compared to other Southeast Asian countries in the prevalence of employee burnout. These individuals are exposed to longer work hours and heavier workload demands. Consequently, the lack of effective interventions to manage these stressors contribute to the emergence of depression, stress, and anxiety

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(Abdul Aziz & Ong, 2024). Given these realities of burnout and psychological distress, there is an urgent need to review, develop and strengthen workplace wellness programs to support young adult employees' holistic well being within organizational settings.

Studies have established that burnout among young adult professionals is evident. The associated factors include working more than fifty hours a week, and dissatisfaction with the job (Aziz & Ong, 2024). Other stressors also include increased workload, role shifts, and the lack of clear workplace goals, contributing to burnout and reduced job satisfaction (Castro et al., 2024). Closely related with burnout is the concept of social connectedness which refers to an individual's subjective sense of closeness in relation to other people and perception of interpersonal relatedness (Lee et al., 2001). Existing studies have indicated the positive impact of social connectedness in alleviating burnout. The support an individual receives from family, friends, school, or community has a positive impact on their health and ability to cope with adversity (Sippel et al., 2015). On the other hand, burnout was associated with loneliness and social isolation

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(Southwick & Southwick, 2020). Moreover, literature has established that distress tolerance is a protective buffer against burnout (Abedi Kadanji et al., 2025; Intentional Outcomes Counselling, 2002). High DT helps in adaptive emotional responses to

life stress. In emotion research, DT is presumed to act as an emotion-regulation ability that facilitates the selection and successful implementation of specific emotion-regulation strategies during stressful episodes (Naragon-Gainey et al., 2017; Tull & Aldao, 2015).

Research has demonstrated a positive relationship between social connectedness and higher distress tolerance among young adults, recognizing social support as a protective factor against mental health problems. High social connectedness is linked to enhanced emotion regulation and improved ability to manage stress, while social isolation often leads to lower distress tolerance and higher mental health risks (Mari et al., 2023; Cao et al., 2024; Akbari & Khalatbari, 2025). These findings suggest that social support functions as a protective factor, alleviating the effects of stress and enhancing individuals' ability to cope with challenging circumstances (Ebrahimi et al., 2019). Several studies have emphasized its role not only in mitigating stress but in fostering emotional regulation and improving distress tolerance (Ashoori, 2016 ; Sohrabi, 2019).

In collectivist societies, social connections are deeply embedded in everyday life. Studies have shown that the lack of social connectedness has been linked to burnout and poor psychological well-being. It provides an adaptive advantage by promoting the sharing of resources and providing a sense of safety in various contexts (Southwick & Southwick, 2020). These findings contribute to a growing body of literature that supports psychosocial resources and strengths-based approaches, such as optimism and social connectedness, that are crucial for maintaining psychological wellbeing (Wickramaratne, 2022).

Overall, these findings have shown the critical role of social connections as a healthy coping mechanism and their evident contribution in enhancing one's ability to tolerate distress and mitigate burnout. This implies that having a strong social support system is an important external resource in the face of adversity.

Distress tolerance is gaining recognition as a key variable in understanding the development and maintenance of mental disorders, as well as in creating preventive and therapeutic interventions (De Lafontaine, 2023).

High DT is a beneficial internal resource because it supports adaptive emotional responses to environmental stressors. In research studies involving emotions, DT is considered as an emotional regulation ability of an individual through the process of appraising and successful implementation of specific emotion regulation approaches during challenging situations. (Naragon-Gainey et al., 2017, Tull & Aldao, 2015). By nurturing the ability to withstand

distressing experiences, distress tolerance allows individuals to be equipped with skills that can help them manage setbacks instead of resorting to unhealthy coping strategies.

In sum, distress tolerance proves to be instrumental in its function as a protective factor against burnout. Having higher levels of distress tolerance lowers the risk of burnout as it acts as an adaptive or healthy coping strategy rather than relying on unhelpful approaches to stressors. In line with this, empirical evidence indicates that low distress tolerance significantly predicts the use of maladaptive emotion-regulation strategies, including emotional suppression, avoidance, rumination, and substance use (Jeffries et al., 2016; Lass et al., 2020; Zegel et al., 2019).

Focusing on the psychological well being of young adult professionals, the study aims to investigate the relationship between burnout, social connectedness, and distress tolerance. Because of the rising concerns of mental health problems and burnout, the finding of this study is relevant to Filipino society. This study seeks to enhance understanding of how an individual's ability to tolerate distress and manage unpleasant emotions can lead to functioning more effectively. Additionally, it can provide a theoretical framework and empirical basis that integrates both relational and intrapersonal resources in explaining occupational well-being.

While social connectedness has been shown to reduce burnout among young adults (Ruisoto et al., 2021; Zhang, 2021; Einav et al., 2024), the extent to which this effect depends on individual capacities remains unclear. Distress tolerance, a key personal resource, may strengthen or weaken the protective effect of social connectedness, however, few studies have examined this moderating effect among employed Filipino young adults, as existing research has focused more broadly on social support and mental health (Acoba, 2024). Hence, this study addresses this gap by investigating whether distress tolerance moderates the relationship between social connectedness and burnout within a Filipino collectivist culture. Furthermore, there is a need for future studies to explore the role of potential moderators that may enhance employee health and well-being (Voglino et al., 2022; Pereira & Coelho, 2013; Martín-Brufau et al., 2020; Lin et al., 2021).

The study investigates the relationship between social connectedness, distress tolerance and burnout among young Filipino professional adults. It is hypothesized that social connectedness is negatively associated with burnout. This relationship will be moderated by distress tolerance.

Along with this hypothesis, we aim to answer this question:

1. Does Distress Tolerance moderate the relationship between Social Connectedness and Burnout?

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Design. This research utilized a cross-sectional predictive design with moderation analysis that explored the relationship between the variables burnout and its predictor, social connectedness. Distress Tolerance was chosen as the moderator to examine how it affects the relationship between these two variables. This research collected data at a single point in time to examine whether social connectedness predicts burnout and whether this relationship depends on the level of distress tolerance.

Participants and Sampling technique. Participants were 433 Filipino young adults aged 20 to 40 years from selected areas from Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. To determine the sample size for a moderation analysis, this study utilized Krejcie and Morgan table. Behavior and social science researchers use this for sample size determination. The KMT suggests that 384 respondents is sufficient for a population of 1,000,000 or more (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). In addition, Roscoe's guidelines in determining sample size indicated that a sample size greater than 30 and less than 500 is suitable for most behavioural studies, while a sample size larger than 500 may lead to a Type II error (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). After a data cleaning procedure checking on the inclusion criteria of participants, there are a total of 433 participants qualified, exceeding the needed sample size.

Out of the 433 participants, the mean age is 31.70, with a standard deviation of 4.90. In terms of gender, the majority (70.67%) identified as females, (27.25%) identified as male, (1.85%) identified as Non-Binary or Third gender and (0.23%) preferred not to say. The participants are located in different regions of the Philippines. The majority of respondents were from Metro Manila (NCR) (57.97%). This was followed by participants from Luzon (30.95%). A smaller proportion of respondents came from Mindanao (6.93%) and the Visayas (4.16%).

Looking at the field of work, the largest proportion of participants are currently employed in the education sector (41.11%). This was followed by those working in corporate settings (18.94%) and healthcare (13.63%). Participants from government or public service comprised (11.78%) of the sample while those in technology/IT accounted for (9.01%). The fewest include individuals in private business (7.85%), engineering (2.31%), and other fields (3.70%). For the employment status, the majority of participants were full-time employees (85.45%), followed by contractual or project-based work (6.93%). Self-employed individuals comprised (3.00%) of the sample, while part-time employees accounted for (1.85%). Freelancers (1.15%) and those in other employment categories (1.62%) are the smallest groups. With the average work hours per week, the majority of participants reported working 30 to 40 hours (56.35%). This was followed by those working 41 to 50 hours per week (30.48%). A smaller proportion of respondents worked less than 30 hours (7.85%) or more than 50 hours per week

(5.31%). Lastly, for the work arrangement, the majority of participants reported working fully onsite (61.20%). This was followed by those engaged in hybrid or flexible work arrangements (29.56%). And few respondents reported working fully remote (9.24%).

The participants were recruited through purposive and convenience voluntary sampling, a nonprobability sampling method in which respondents will be recruited based on their specified characteristics, convenience, and availability (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Morling, 2021). To ensure the relevance of participants with the research objective, the following inclusion criteria were considered: (1) must be between the ages of 20 and 40, (2) currently employed, (3) male or female (4) must be a Filipino citizen and (5) currently residing in the Philippines. Participants were also recruited through social media platforms.

The study was conducted through the online dissemination of an online survey. Publication materials were posted on various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Google Mail and Viber aided in the recruitment of participants.

Instruments. The study employed three validated psychological instruments to assess the variables of interest: Distress Tolerance Scale (Simons & Gaher, 2005), Burnout Assessment Tool (Schaufeli et al., 2019), and Social Connectedness Scale--Revised (Lee et al., 2001).

The DTS is a 15-item self-report scale that assesses the ability to withstand negative psychological states. Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1= Strongly agree to 5 = Strongly disagree), with lower scores indicating lower levels of distress tolerance (Hsu et al., 2023).

The Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT) is a burnout measure. The BAT measures four burnout dimensions: (a) Exhaustion, (b) Mental Distance, (c) Cognitive Impairment, and (d) Emotional Impairment. BAT can provide a composite score that comprehensively reflects the overall experience of burnout (Schaufeli et al., 2019)

The Social Connectedness Scale (SCS) was developed with the purpose of measuring individuals' sense of belongingness. This scale measures four dimensions of social connectedness, namely belongingness, closeness, support and satisfaction. Confirmatory Factor Analysis results demonstrated that the scale has a unidimensional structure of a single factor with 20 items (Sahin & Duy, 2021).

Data Collection Procedures. The study was conducted through the online dissemination of an online survey. Participants who volunteered to participate in the study received a Google Form link to the survey questionnaire sent through various online platforms. For confidentiality purposes, all collected data are stored securely in an online database accessible only to us.

The survey includes the following: an overview of the study, informed consent, information sheet, participant

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demographic information, the three self-report assessment measures for social connectedness, distress tolerance and burnout and a debriefing statement and contact information of the researchers for concerns and queries.

The self-reported measures were adapted for online administration and all instructions included in the respective scale manuals were used. The scales were administered in the following order: Distress Tolerance Scale, Social Connectedness Scale- Revised, and Burnout Assessment Tool.

Data Analysis Procedure. Given the study's focus on examining the influence of multiple independent variables on a single dependent variable, moderated multiple regression, a form of multiple linear regression, was employed. Moderated multiple regression models allow the relationship between a dependent variable and an independent variable to vary depending on the level of another independent variable. This moderating relationship, often referred to as the interaction effect, is modeled by including a product term as an additional independent variable (Irwin and McClelland (2001).

The statistical analysis was conducted using Jamovi statistical software. The moderated multiple regression allowed for the assessment of both the main effects of social connectedness and main effects of distress tolerance on burnout, and the conditional effect of social connectedness at varying levels of distress tolerance. Statistical significance was set at $\alpha = .05$, and effect sizes were evaluated to determine the magnitude of the relationships.

Before conducting the moderation analysis, several diagnostic tests were performed to ensure the data met the requirements for Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression. The suitability of the data for parametric analysis was done wherein normality was assessed for all three variables, namely, Burnout, Distress Tolerance, and Social Connections. Preliminary assumption checks revealed that the data has met the assumptions for independence of observations and multicollinearity. To mitigate the risk of multicollinearity when computing interaction terms, the predictor variable (social connections) and the moderator variable (distress tolerance) were mean-centered prior to analysis. Following mean-centering, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) scores were assessed. The VIF values for Social Connectedness (1.33), Distress Tolerance (1.30), and the interaction term (1.02) were all well below the conservative threshold of 5, with a mean VIF of 1.22. This indicates that the predictors are not redundant and the model is stable, confirming that multicollinearity was not a confounding issue in the data.

Independence of residuals was confirmed using the Durbin-Watson statistic ($d = 2.09$), which fell within the acceptable range of 1.50 to 2.50, suggesting no significant autocorrelation. Diagnostic testing, however, revealed violations regarding the distribution of residuals. Descriptive statistics for skewness and kurtosis, along with the Shapiro-

Wilk test, were utilized. Univariate normality was strictly violated according to the Shapiro-Wilk tests for Burnout ($W = .98$, $p = 0.00003$), Distress Tolerance ($W = .99$, $p = 0.003$), and Social Connections ($W = .99$, $p = .001$). For all three variables, skewness values (ranging from -0.35 to 0.48) and kurtosis values (ranging from -0.32 to 0.47) fell well within the acceptable range of -1 to +1 suggesting only slight deviations from symmetry.

Visual inspection of Normal Q-Q plots was conducted for the regression residuals. The Q-Q plots revealed that the residuals followed a largely normal distribution and the theoretical diagonal line closely, with only minor deviations in the extreme tails. Given the large sample size ($N = 433$), formal tests are often overpowered, and the model was deemed appropriate for parametric testing using moderation analysis.

Testing for Homoscedasticity and Linearity were conducted. Linearity was confirmed via a residuals-versus-fitted (RVF) plot. However, a formal Breusch-Pagan test was significant ($(1) = 15.45$, $p < .001$), indicating the presence of heteroscedasticity.

To account for these violations and ensure the reliability of the statistical inferences, the final moderation analysis was conducted using a bias-corrected bootstrapping procedure via the *medmod* module (Ravi, 2020) in the Jamovi statistical software. Bootstrapping is highly useful when there are violations of normality and homoscedasticity because it empirically estimates the sampling distribution rather than relying on theoretical assumptions. The model was executed using 5,000 bootstrap resamples to generate robust standard errors and 95% confidence intervals (CIs) for the main effects and the interaction term. Statistical significance for the effects was determined based on whether the 95% bootstrapped confidence intervals contained zero.

Descriptive statistics were computed for the participant demographics, and mean-centering of scores of predictor variables was done to minimize collinearity.

To examine the predictive relationship between social connections and burnout, and the moderating role of distress tolerance in this relationship, a series of multiple linear regressions were carried out with burnout scores, with SC score being the predictor variable and DT score as the moderating variable.

Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was done to test the hypotheses and check for zero-order effects. In the first step, the mean-centered scores on social connections and mean-centered scores on distress tolerance were regressed, followed by interaction or combined impact of the predictor and moderator. Afterward, conditional or interaction effects of distress tolerance were plotted. Moreover, a post hoc test through multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to confirm the predictive

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capacity of the two variables (i.e. social connections and distress tolerance to burnout).

III. RESULTS

As seen in Table 1, the average level of burnout of participants is 2.58, with participants scoring from 1.13 to 4.43 and with a standard deviation of 0.60 ($M = 2.58$, $SD (\sigma) = 0.60$). The range of scores that can be obtained from the Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT) is 1 to 5 (Schaufeli et al., 2019). The average level of social connections of participants is 84.37, with participants scoring from 28 to 117 and with a standard deviation of 14.59 ($M = 84.37$, $SD (\sigma) = 14.59$). The range of scores that can be obtained from the Social Connectedness Scale- Revised Lee et al.,2001) is 20 to 120. Meanwhile, the levels of Distress tolerance were measured through the use of the Distress Tolerance Scale (DTS) (Simons & Gaher, 2005). The average level of distress tolerance of participants is 3.17, with participants scoring from 1.27 to 4.73 and with a standard deviation of 0.68 ($M = 3.17$, $SD (\sigma) = 0.68$). The range of scores that can be obtained from the Distress Tolerance Scale is 1 to 5 (Simons & Gaher, 2005).

Similarly, social connectedness was significantly negatively correlated with burnout ($r = -0.520$, $p < .001$), suggesting that higher social connectedness is associated with lower burnout. In addition, distress tolerance was significantly positively correlated with social connectedness ($r = 0.481$, $p < .001$), indicating that individuals with higher distress tolerance tend to report higher levels of social connectedness

Overall, the results suggest that both distress tolerance and social connectedness are important protective factors associated with lower burnout, and they are moderately positively related to each other.

The results in table 3 below indicated that predictor social connection was a statistically significant negative predictor of burnout, ($b = -0.013$, $SE = 0.002$, $Z = -6.83$, $p < .001$, 95%, $CI [-0.017, -0.009]$). This suggests that higher levels of social connections are associated with lower levels of burnout.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of the Variables (n = 433)

	Burnout	Distress Tolerance	Social Connectedness
N	433	433	433
Mean	2.57897	3.17552	84.37413
Median	2.52174	3.26667	85
Standard deviation	0.60222	0.68452	14.59003
Minimum	1.13043	1.26667	28
Maximum	4.43478	4.73333	117

A Pearson correlation analysis was computed to examine the relationships among distress tolerance, social connectedness, and burnout. Results showed a significant strong negative correlation between distress tolerance and burnout ($r = -0.576$, $p < .001$), indicating that higher distress tolerance is associated with lower levels of burnout.

Similarly, the moderator, distress tolerance was found to be a significant negative predictor of burnout, ($b = -0.372$, $SE = 0.043$, $Z = -8.74$, $p < .001$, 95% , $CI [-0.459,-0.298]$), indicating that higher values of distress tolerance remained a strong, significant unique predictor of lower burnout.

Table 2
Correlation Matrix among Variables (n = 433)

		DISTRESS	BURNOUT SCALE	SOCIAL
Distress Tolerance	Pearson's r	—		
	df	—		
	p-value	—		
Burnout Scale	Pearson's r	-0.576***	—	
	df	431	—	
	p-value	<.001	—	
Social Connections	Pearson's r	0.481***	-0.520***	—
	df	431	431	—
	p-value	<.001	<.001	—

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 3. Moderation Estimates (n = 433)
Bootstrapped Moderation Estimates for Social Connections and Distress Tolerance on Burnout

	Estimate	SE	95% Interval Lower	Confidence Upper	Z	p
Social Connections	-0.01320	0.00193	-0.01683	-0.00942	-6.82537	< .00001
Distress Tolerance	-0.37247	0.04260	-0.45903	-0.29765	-8.74263	< .00001
B * A	-0.00108	0.00292	-0.00616	0.00524	-0.36918	0.71199

A moderation analysis was conducted using a 5,000-sample bootstrap procedure to determine whether distress tolerance (A) moderates the relationship between social connections (B) and burnout.

However, the interaction term between social connections and distress tolerance was not statistically significant, and was found to have negative association ($b = -0.00108$, $SE = 0.003$, $Z = -0.37$, $p = .712$, 95% , CI [-0.006, 0.005]). This confirms that the protective effect of social

connectedness does not vary significantly across different levels of distress tolerance. The non-significant results also implies that the relationship between social connectedness and burnout does not fully depend on levels of distress tolerance. The negative interaction effect suggests that the

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value of the influence of the moderating variable is reduced but does not imply the direction of the effect (i.e., negative).

Overall, while both social connections and distress tolerance independently predict the outcome, there is no evidence to support a moderation effect. Therefore, the hypothesis is not supported; distress tolerance does not significantly moderate the impact of social connections on burnout. It also suggests that the effect of social connectedness on burnout is consistent regardless of distress tolerance levels. Distress tolerance does not strengthen or weaken that relationship. Instead, both variables act as independent predictors.

As shown in Table 4 below, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the extent to which the predictors explain the outcome variable. The overall model

was statistically significant, $F(3, 429) = 99.20, p < .001$, indicating that the predictors collectively explained a significant proportion of variance in the outcome variable.

The model explained 41.0% of the variance in Burnout ($R^2 = .410$), with an adjusted R^2 of .405, suggesting good model stability after adjusting for the number of predictors. The overall correlation between the observed and predicted values was moderate to strong ($R = .640$), indicating a substantial relationship between the set of predictors and the outcome variable.

Overall, the results suggest that the model provides a strong fit and that the predictors make a meaningful contribution in explaining the outcome variable.

Table 4

Post Hoc Linear Regression Model Fit Measures (n = 433)

Model Fit Measures

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Overall Model Test			
				F	df1	df2	p
1	0.640	0.410	0.405	99.2	3	429	<.001

Note. Models estimated using sample size of N=433

Table 5

Post Hoc Linear Regression Model Coefficients (n = 433)

Model Coefficients - BURNOUT SCALE

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept	4.88102	0.14209	34.350	<.001
Social Connectedness	-0.01320	0.00177	-7.480	<.001
Distress Tolerance	-0.37250	0.03724	-10.002	<.001
INT	-0.00108	0.00200	-0.540	.590

IV. DISCUSSION

High Levels of Burnout Among Young Adult Professionals

The results of the current study revealed that the mean scores of the participants have a value of 2.58. The range of the participants' scores is 1.13 to 4.43, with 1.13 being the lowest reported score and 4.43 being the highest reported score. Based on the Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT) statistical norms, 2.58 indicates a high level of burnout among participants. The findings support existing literature indicating that the Philippines has one of the highest prevalence rates of employee burnout compared to other Southeast Asian countries. Despite the majority of participants reporting work hours of only 30–40 hours perweek, the findings suggest that burnout may not solely depend on the number of hours worked. This contrasts with previous studies emphasizing that prolonged work hours contribute to occupational burnout (Abdul Aziz & Ong, 2024).

Thus, the findings of the present study recommend the importance of examining not only the quantity of workload demands but also the quality and nature of work-related stressors in understanding burnout among young Filipino adults.

The findings further revealed that social connectedness and distress tolerance served as protective factors against burnout. However, despite the presence of these psychological resources, participants still reported high burnout levels, suggesting that these protective mechanisms may be insufficient under chronic or demanding conditions. This finding is consistent with the literature indicating that burnout typically develops from an imbalance between high job demands and insufficient resources (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Additionally, personal life stressors and inherent individual vulnerabilities may increase susceptibility to burnout among employees. Consequently, it is crucial to equip individuals with adequate psychosocial and organizational resources that promote workplace well-being and resilience.

The findings of the present study may also be understood through the lens of the Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 2011). This theory posits that individuals strive to obtain, maintain, and protect valued resources. According to the theory, four broad categories of resources are identified: personal characteristics (e.g., self-esteem, self-efficacy); conditions (e.g., employment, stable marital/partner relations); objects (e.g., physical possessions, natural and built environments); and energies (e.g., money, skills) (Ritchi & Gill, 2024). This theory emphasizes that under conditions of chronic stress, the remaining resources become increasingly limited in their effectiveness. This may be the case because loss begets further loss and can lead to loss spirals. Under a chronic stressful condition, not only do people experience more and more loss, but may also exhaust

their resource reserves, leaving them with a lack of capacity to cope and resist stress. This framework may explain why participants in the present study continued to experience high burnout despite reporting the presence of social connectedness and distress tolerance.

Based on the demographic profile of the participants, 41.11% were employed in the field of education. This finding is relevant given previous studies documenting high levels of work-related burnout among teachers and its weak negative relationship with psychological well-being. Orines et al. (2023) found that teachers' psychological well-being deteriorates when they encounter higher burnout at work. The high percentage of young adult professionals working in the academe in this present study may therefore partly explain the elevated burnout scores observed among participants.

Several studies have likewise examined burnout within Asian cultural contexts. Employees in many Asian countries are traditionally faced with high work demands, excessive workloads, and poor work–life balance (Le et al., 2020), which consequently contribute to reduced job satisfaction (Daud, 2016; Irawanto, 2021). Furthermore, inflexible work arrangements amid rising occupational demands remain prevalent in many Asian workplaces. In the present study, 70.94% of participants reported adhering to a single work arrangement. According to Le et al. (2020), such rigid work structures may be connected to strong cultural values emphasizing work as a means of fulfilling familial and social responsibilities.

High levels of Social Connectedness among Young Adult Professionals

The results of the present study indicate that the participants demonstrated high levels of social connectedness, with a mean score of 84.37. Participants' scores ranged from 28 to 117. Based on the Social Connectedness Scale–Revised, possible scores range from 20 to 120, with higher scores reflecting a stronger sense of social connectedness and lower scores indicating feelings of isolation and loneliness. The findings therefore suggest that the participants generally perceive themselves as socially connected, able to relate well with others and have a sense of belonging within their social networks.

High levels of social connectedness are characterized by feelings of belongingness, closeness, support, and satisfaction (Sahin & Duy, 2021). The findings of the present study suggest that young adult professionals experience a meaningful sense of interpersonal closeness and relatedness with others, consistent with the conceptualization of social connectedness proposed by Lee et al. (2001).

The high levels of social connectedness observed among participants may reflect the Filipino collectivist culture, wherein interpersonal relationships, family cohesion, and social support systems are highly valued. In collectivist

societies, individuals often rely on strong social ties as sources of emotional support, and coping during stressful experiences. Such findings are consistent with literature emphasizing the importance of social relationships in promoting psychological well-being and adaptive functioning among young adults.

The high levels of social connectedness observed among participants may be further understood through the lens of the Belongingness Theory (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). This states that individuals are motivated to develop and maintain satisfying social relationships in order to experience a sense of relatedness with others. These relatedness needs are met through meaningful social connections within one's social network. It requires high quality and meaningful relationships (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), which leads to positive psychological outcomes (Wu et al., 2016).

Social Connectedness as a Predictor of Burnout

The results of the present study revealed that social connectedness was significantly and negatively correlated with burnout ($r = -0.520$, $p < .001$), suggesting that higher social connectedness is associated with lower levels of burnout among young adult professionals. Furthermore, social connectedness emerged as a statistically significant negative predictor of burnout, ($b = -0.013$, $SE = 0.002$, $Z = -6.83$, $p < .001$, 95% CI $[-0.017, -0.009]$) demonstrating that as social connectedness increases, burnout levels tend to decrease. The post hoc multiple regression analysis further provided evidence that social connectedness significantly predicted burnout ($b = -0.013$, $p < .001$). These findings suggest that individuals who experience stronger social connections, a greater sense of belongingness, and supportive social networks are less likely to experience burnout. Together with distress tolerance, social connectedness contributes to a model that explains approximately 41% of the total variance in burnout scores ($R^2 = .410$). These results highlight social connection as a fundamental resource for psychological well-being and a reliable indicator of burnout risk in adult populations.

The findings of the present study are consistent with existing literature emphasizing the protective role of social connectedness in mitigating burnout and promoting psychological well-being across various occupational settings (Wickramaratne, 2022). The results also contribute to the limited local studies examining psychosocial factors associated with burnout among young professionals.

In sum, these findings reinforce the importance of fostering supportive interpersonal relationships and strengthening social connectedness in workplace settings.

Social Connectedness and Distress Tolerance

Based on the statistical analysis conducted in the present study, distress tolerance was found to be significantly and positively correlated with social connectedness ($r =$

0.481 , $p < .001$). This finding indicates that individuals with higher levels of distress tolerance also tend to report higher levels of social connectedness. This implies that participants who are better able to manage and tolerate emotional discomfort are likewise more likely to experience meaningful interpersonal relationships and a stronger sense of belongingness with others.

The findings of the present study are consistent with previous research demonstrating a positive relationship between social connectedness and distress tolerance among young adults. Studies have shown that individuals with higher levels of social connectedness tend to demonstrate better emotion regulation, and improved capacity to manage stressful experiences. Conversely, social isolation has been associated with lower distress tolerance and heightened vulnerability to mental health concerns (Akbari & Khalatbari, 2025; Cao et al., 2024; Mari et al., 2023).

The present findings highlight the critical role of social relationships as a healthy coping mechanism and protective factor that contribute to an individual's ability to tolerate distress.

Distress Tolerance as a Moderator

The results of the present study revealed that the participants demonstrated average levels of distress tolerance, with a mean score of 3.17 and scores ranging from 1.27 to 4.73. Based on the Distress Tolerance Scale (Simons & Gaher, 2005), possible scores range from 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating greater capacity to tolerate emotional distress and withstand negative psychological states. The findings therefore suggest that participants generally possess a moderate ability to manage emotionally distressing experiences and cope with unpleasant emotions.

The present findings may further be understood through Emotion Regulation Theory, which emphasizes the role of emotional regulation processes utilized by an individual in managing distressing experiences. DT supports adaptive emotive reactions to stress by functioning as an ER skill. It enables individuals to select and implement effective strategies during challenging situations (Naragon-Gainey et al., 2017; Tull & Aldao, 2015). Thus, DT facilitates behaviors that regulate emotions in constructive ways. This viewpoint suggests that people with high DT are more likely to engage in positive ER practices such as problem-solving and labeling emotions when faced with stress, whereas those with low DT may rely on less effective ER techniques like suppression and avoidance (Leyro et al., 2010; Jeffries, 2016). Thus, the average distress tolerance scores observed among participants suggest a moderate capacity to regulate emotions effectively and cope adaptively with stressful experiences.

The interaction term between social connections and distress tolerance was not statistically significant, and was found to have negative association ($b = -0.00108$, $SE = 0.003$, $Z = -0.37$, $p = .712$, 95% CI $[-0.006, 0.005]$). This

indicates that distress tolerance does not significantly moderate the relationship between social connections and burnout. While both social connections and distress tolerance both serve as a protective factor in mitigating burnout and independently predict burnout, there is no evidence to support a moderation effect. The protective influence of social connectedness on burnout levels does not change regardless of whether an individual possesses high or low distress tolerance. This finding suggests an additive model where both factors contribute to lower burnout independently rather than through a multiplicative buffering effect.

Distress Tolerance and Burnout

Results of this study further showed a significant strong negative correlation between distress tolerance and burnout ($r = -0.576$, $p < .001$), indicating that higher distress tolerance is associated with lower levels of burnout. Distress tolerance was found to be a significant negative predictor of burnout, ($b = -0.372$, $SE = 0.043$, $Z = -8.74$, $p < .001$, 95% CI $[-0.459, -0.298]$), this suggests that the ability to tolerate emotional discomfort, difficult situations, and stressful experiences may serve as a protective factor against burnout. In addition, the post hoc test through multiple regression analysis was able to provide evidence that Distress tolerance statistically predicted Burnout ($b = -0.3725$, $p < .001$).

This affirms studies claiming that individuals who possess higher distress tolerance may demonstrate greater capacity for adaptive responding in distressing contexts. (Leyro et al., 2010). Thus, distress tolerance is a protective buffer against burnout (Abedi Kadanji et al., 2025; Intentional Outcomes Counselling, 2002). High DT helps in adaptive emotional responses to life stress.

By nurturing the ability to withstand distressing experiences, distress tolerance allows young adult professionals to be equipped with skills that can help them manage setbacks instead of resorting to unhealthy coping strategies. For instance, people with low distress tolerance and are experiencing burnout may utilize maladaptive strategies like overeating, substance abuse, or social withdrawal.

Overall, distress tolerance plays a crucial role in coping with difficult situations in the workplace, as it affects a variety of processes involved in self-regulation, including attention, cognitive appraisals of distressing emotional and physical states, and both emotional and behavioral responses to distress.

V. CONCLUSION

Overall, the findings of the study revealed that young adult professionals experience high levels of burnout, high levels of social connectedness and moderate levels of distress tolerance. Moderation analysis revealed that the relationship between social connectedness and burnout does not fully depend on levels of distress tolerance. However,

post hoc multiple regression analysis showed that social connectedness and distress tolerance significantly predicts levels of burnout. Thus, this study was able to emphasize the importance of Social connectedness and distress tolerance as significant protective factors against burnout, highlighting the important role of supportive and meaningful interpersonal relationships and adaptive coping in promoting psychological well-being.

Furthermore, social connectedness was positively associated with distress tolerance, suggesting that meaningful social relationships may strengthen individuals' capacity to manage emotional distress. Finally, the study emphasizes the importance of fostering supportive social environments in the workplace and developing emotional coping resources to help reduce burnout and enhance well-being among young adult professionals.

VI. PRACTICAL VALUE OF THE PAPER

The study's findings have significant recommendations for understanding and addressing burnout among young adult professionals. To support their well-being and address burnout, it is vital to challenge stigma and facilitate safe and open discussions about stressors often encountered in the workplace.

Organizations can strengthen employees' wellness programs by offering diverse forms of support and promoting a positive work environment. Interventions on internal psychological resources such as building distress tolerance, social support systems and peer support groups can be effective strategies for understanding and reducing burnout. However, it is vital to ensure that the quality of social support one receives possesses genuineness, cohesiveness, unconditional positive regard for the person and other positive qualities. This will enable young adult professionals to establish meaningful relationships that can serve as a protective factor.

Psychosocial and psychoeducational preventive programs may anchor on educating employees on the symptoms of burnout, the function of distress tolerance in facilitating emotional regulation and healthy coping mechanisms and the value of social connectedness in the face of stressful situations. Thereby, empowering young adult professionals by gaining deeper self-awareness about their capabilities and potentials and further equipping them with necessary skills in nurturing their well-being as they also strive to reach their career-related goals.

VII. DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research may replicate the current study by utilizing a mixed method approach. Incorporating a qualitative approach may provide a deeper understanding of the unique experiences of young adults regarding occupational burnout and workplace well-being. Through interviews, focus group discussions, or narratives, researchers

may gain richer insights into the personal, social, and organizational factors that influence employees' experiences of burnout and their capacity to cope with distress.

Future studies may also explore the different dimensions of the Burnout Assessment Tool and the Distress Tolerance Scale to determine which specific factors are strongly associated with workplace well-being. Examining these dimensions individually may contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship among burnout, distress tolerance, and social connections. Additionally, future researchers may consider including participants from diverse industries, age groups, and organizational settings to enhance the generalizability of the findings.

VIII. DISCLOSURE

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