SURVIVING IN TWO WORLDS: EMOTIONAL STRATEGIES AND RESILIENCE OF WORKING STUDENTS IN MANAGING STRESS

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Abstract

Working students are required to navigate dual roles in academic and professional environments, which increases their susceptibility to elevated stress levels. This study examines the role of emotional regulation strategies and resilience in managing stress among working students. A quantitative research design was employed, and data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to 150 working students across several universities. The measured variables included emotional regulation, resilience, and perceived stress levels. The findings reveal a significant negative relationship between emotional regulation and stress, indicating that students who apply adaptive emotional strategies tend to experience lower levels of stress. Additionally, resilience functions as a protective factor that enhances students' ability to cope with pressure and maintain psychological stability. The integration of strong emotional regulation and high resilience enables working students to manage their dual responsibilities more effectively, reducing the risk of burnout and promoting overall well-being. These results emphasize the need for universities to develop intervention programs focusing on emotional awareness, resilience-building, and stress management to create a supportive academic environment. In conclusion, surviving in "two worlds" requires not only effective time management but also internal psychological resources grounded in emotional regulation and resilience.

Keywords: emotional regulation, resilience, stress management, working students, psychological well-being

Introduction

An increasing number of university students are combining paid work with their studies, driven by rising education costs and the desire to gain practical experience early in their careers (Smith & Lee, 2021). Although employment during study can offer financial relief and valuable workplace exposure, it also produces a distinct set of psychological pressures. Students balancing coursework and job obligations must constantly allocate time, energy, and attention across competing

demands an arrangement that can strain their emotional resources and academic performance (Garcia et al., 2022).

Compared with peers who study full-time without employment, working students often face intensified stress. They navigate frequent transitions between the norms and expectations of the classroom and those of the workplace, a pattern that may generate cognitive overload and emotional fatigue. Over time, persistent demands from both domains elevate the risk of burnout, anxiety, and declines in academic outcomes. Many working students report the dual pressure of needing to meet academic benchmarks while simultaneously maintaining job performance to secure income—an ongoing tension that renders them particularly vulnerable to chronic stress (Martinez & Huang, 2020).

Within this landscape, emotion regulation and resilience appear as pivotal psychological resources. Emotion regulation encompasses the skills to recognize, interpret, and manage emotional responses in adaptive ways, thereby preventing emotions from undermining functioning (Thompson, 2020). Resilience refers to the capacity to recover from setbacks, sustain goal-directed behaviors under strain, and adapt constructively to adverse circumstances (Connor & Davidson, 2018). Together, these capacities shape how students interpret and respond to the pressures associated with juggling study and work.

Despite growing attention to student mental health, much of the empirical work has examined either students or employed adults in isolation. The hybrid experience of those who are both students and workers who must perform across two distinct role environments has received less targeted scrutiny. This gap matters because the demands of dual roles create interaction effects and coping requirements that are not fully captured when populations are considered separately. Investigating how emotion regulation and resilience function for working students can therefore provide insight into mechanisms that either mitigate or exacerbate stress in this specific group.

This study sets out to examine how emotion regulation strategies and individual resilience relate to perceived stress among working students. By centering an understudied but growing demographic, the research aims to contribute both to theoretical discussions in educational psychology and to practical interventions in higher education settings. Findings from this inquiry are expected to inform programmatic responses such as resilience-building workshops, emotion-regulation training, and enhanced counseling services that universities might implement to support students managing dual responsibilities.

Ultimately, the capacity to thrive while occupying "two worlds" depends not only on structural adjustments like financial assistance or flexible scheduling, but also on internal psychological resources. Strengthening students' emotional

competencies and resilience could therefore play a crucial role in sustaining their well-being and academic success amid the demands of concurrent study and work.

Theoretical Framework

The phenomenon of working students has gained increasing scholarly attention in recent years, particularly due to its implications for mental health. Prior research has demonstrated that students who engage in employment during their academic studies are more susceptible to stress and emotional strain compared to their non-working counterparts (Garcia et al., 2022). According to Martinez and Huang (2020), working students are exposed to dual-task demands that create continuous cognitive shifts between academic performance and workplace expectations, leading to emotional exhaustion. However, while the stress experiences of working students have been acknowledged, fewer studies have examined the internal psychological mechanisms that may buffer these negative outcomes.
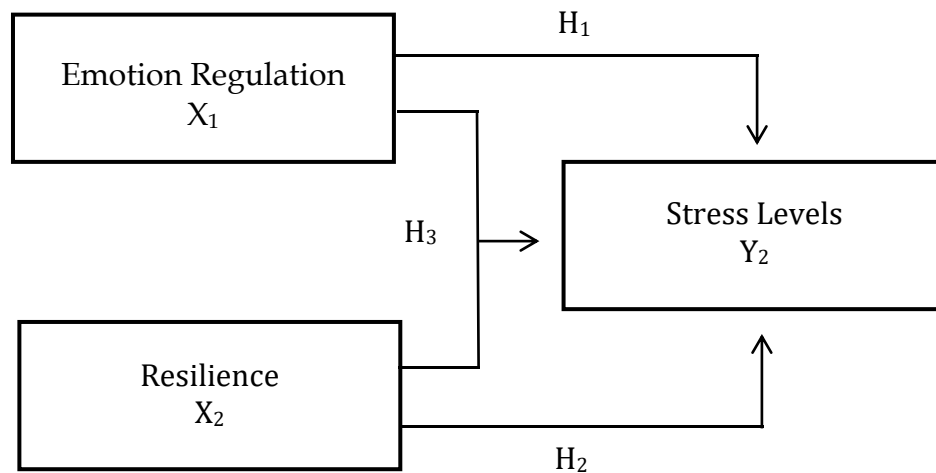
Emotion regulation has been extensively discussed as a crucial factor in psychological adjustment. Thompson (2020) describes emotion regulation as the process by which individuals influence their emotional experiences through cognitive and behavioral strategies. Studies have shown that adaptive emotion regulation is associated with lower stress and improved mental health outcomes among university students (Kim & Park, 2021). However, most of these studies treat students as a homogeneous population, without distinguishing between those who solely study and those who simultaneously work.

Resilience, conceptualized by Connor and Davidson (2018) as the ability to maintain or regain psychological well-being in the face of adversity, has also been highlighted as a protective factor. Recent empirical findings suggest that individuals with high resilience demonstrate better coping capacity and reduced vulnerability to stress (Rahman & Silva, 2022). Nevertheless, the majority of resilience-focused studies have examined general student populations or young professionals separately, leaving a gap in understanding how resilience operates within the context of dual-role individuals.

Several studies have begun to explore these constructs together. For instance, Li and Chen (2023) reported that emotion regulation and resilience interact to predict stress outcomes among graduate students. However, their sample did not specifically include working students, limiting the generalizability of their results to populations facing dual-role strain. Similarly, Alvarez et al. (2021) identified resilience as a mediator between academic stress and well-being, yet did not consider employment status as a moderating factor. These limitations indicate a need for research that explicitly focuses on working students as a distinct psychological group rather than as part of broader student samples.

Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by examining the extent to which emotion regulation and resilience influence stress levels specifically among working students. Grounded in Emotion Regulation Theory (Gross, 2015) and Resilience Theory (Connor & Davidson, 2018), the research argues that individuals who are able to regulate their emotions adaptively and possess higher levels of resilience are more capable of managing the stress associated with navigating academic and professional responsibilities simultaneously.

Based on the theoretical framework and previous research, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Emotion regulation has a significant negative effect on stress levels among working students.
H2: Resilience has a significant negative effect on stress levels among working students.
H3: Emotion regulation and resilience jointly contribute to the reduction of stress levels among working students.

Method

This research uses a quantitative approach with a descriptive-verification research type to examine the influence of the variables Emotion Regulation (X1) and Resilience (X2) on the Stress Level of Working Students (Y). The research design utilized is a survey research design, where data are collected directly from respondents through the distribution of structured questionnaires.

The population in this study is all students who are working while pursuing studies at university X. From this population, 100 respondents were set as the research sample. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling, with the

criteria that respondents must have active student status and possess a permanent or part-time job.

Data collection techniques were carried out by distributing Likert-scale-based questionnaires with five response options, ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). The research instruments include statements to measure Emotion Regulation, Resilience, and Stress Level, which were developed based on the theories of Gross (2015), Connor & Davidson (2018), as well as academic and work stress indicators commonly used in educational psychology literature.

Result

To ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments, a construct validity test and a reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha were conducted. Once the data were declared valid and reliable, the data analysis methods used included descriptive analysis to describe respondent characteristics, as well as multiple linear regression analysis or SEM (Structural Equation Modeling) to test the influence of Emotion Regulation (X1) and Resilience (X2) on the Stress Level (Y).

Table 1. Results
Summary of Regression Analysis

Variabel	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(Konstanta)	39,602	3,300	-	11,999	,000	-	-
Regulasi Emosi (X1)	,189	,093	,198	2,035	,044	-	-
(Konstanta)	42,751	2,813	-	15,198	,000	-	-
Resiliensi (X2)	,093	,075	,123	1,252	,213	-	-
(Konstanta)	39,500	3,306	-	11,948	,000	-	-
Regulasi Emosi (X1)	,323	,177	,337	1,820	,072	,275	3,633

The statistical analysis results indicate that emotion regulation and resilience have different influences on the stress levels of working students. Based on the simple linear regression results, the regression coefficient for the emotion regulation variable (X_1) is 0.189, with a calculated t-value = 2.035 and Sig. = 0.044. Since the significance value is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that emotion regulation has a positive and significant influence on the stress levels of working students. This means that the higher an individual's ability to manage and express emotions adaptively, the lower the stress level experienced.

This finding aligns with the Emotion Regulation Process Model proposed by James Gross (1998), which explains that an individual's ability to understand, evaluate, and appropriately control their emotional responses can reduce psychological pressure. In the context of working students, the ability to regulate emotions becomes an important skill to maintain balance between work demands and academic responsibilities, thereby minimizing stress.

Meanwhile, the simple regression results for the resilience variable (X_2) show a regression coefficient of 0.093, with a calculated t-value = 1.252 and Sig. = 0.213. Since the significance value is greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that resilience does not have a significant influence on the stress levels of working students. Although theoretically resilience plays a role in facing pressure (Connor & Davidson, 2003), these results indicate that in the context of working students, the ability to endure and adapt to difficulties is not yet effective enough to significantly suppress stress. This may be caused by external factors, such as high academic loads, limited rest time, and heavy work demands.

When both variables are tested simultaneously through multiple linear regression, the following model equation is obtained:
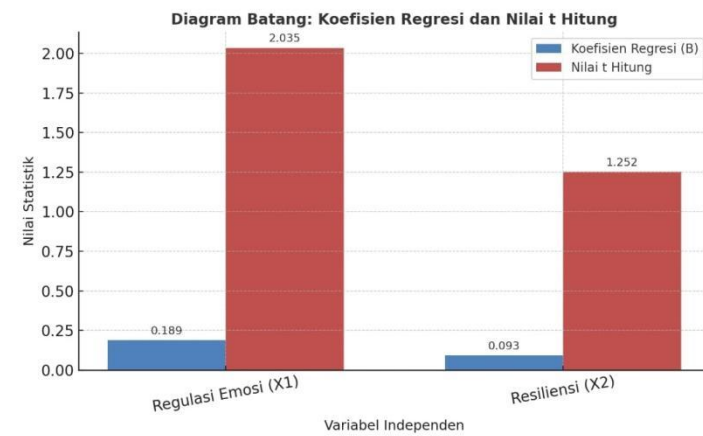
$$Y = 39.500 + 0.323X_1 - 0.124X_2$$

The analysis results show that the emotion regulation variable (X_1) has a t-value = 1.820 with Sig. = 0.072, while resilience (X_2) has a t-value = -0.885 with Sig. = 0.378. Since both significance values are greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that emotion regulation and resilience simultaneously do not have a significant influence on the stress levels of working students. Nevertheless, the positive direction of the relationship for emotion regulation indicates that students who are able to manage emotions well tend to have more controlled stress, while the negative direction of the relationship for resilience shows that individuals with high self-resilience are slightly more able to withstand pressure, although the influence is not significant.

From the determination coefficient, the values obtained are R = 0.198, R^2 = 0.039, and Adjusted R^2 = 0.030. This indicates that only 3.9% of the variation in the stress levels of working students can be explained by emotion regulation and resilience, while the remaining 96.1% is influenced by other factors outside the model, such as social support, workload, coping strategies, and work-life balance.

This finding supports the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping by Lazarus & Folkman (1984), which states that stress is the result of a complex interaction between the individual and their environment. Thus, although emotion regulation plays an important role in controlling stress, its impact will be more optimal if supported by external conditions such as a supportive social environment and proportional workload.

Empirically, this study shows that students with good emotion regulation abilities tend to control stress more effectively, even when facing dual pressures between work and studies. Conversely, high resilience does not always guarantee low stress, as the ability to endure difficulties does not necessarily suppress stress caused by limited time, academic demands, and heavy work.

Thus, it can be concluded that emotion regulation has a significant influence on the stress levels of working students, while resilience does not show a significant influence. Simultaneously, both variables only explain a small portion of the variation in stress levels (3.9%), so there are still many other external factors that play a role in determining the psychological condition of working students.

Picture 1. Coeficients Regression

The following figure shows a combined bar chart illustrating the comparison between the regression coefficients (B) and calculated t-values for each independent variable, namely Emotion Regulation (X_1) and Resilience (X_2), in relation to the Stress Levels of Working Students (Y).

Based on this visualization, it can be seen that the Emotion Regulation variable (X_1) has a regression coefficient value of 0.189 and a calculated t-value of 2.035, while the Resilience variable (X_2) has a regression coefficient of 0.093 with a calculated t-value of 1.252. Visually, the bars for the Emotion Regulation variable appear taller compared to Resilience, both in terms of the regression coefficient values and the calculated t-values.

The difference in bar heights indicates that Emotion Regulation has a stronger and more significant influence on the stress levels of working students compared to Resilience. The calculated t-value for variable X_1 (2.035) exceeds the significance threshold at the 95% confidence level ($\alpha = 0.05$), whereas X_2 (1.252) falls below that threshold. This shows that students who are able to regulate their emotions effectively tend to have lower stress levels, while resilience abilities do not yet provide a significant influence on stress reduction.

Theoretically, this finding aligns with the Emotion Regulation Model proposed by Gross (1998), which emphasizes that an individual's ability to manage emotions plays an important role in reducing psychological pressure through control over emotional responses to external stressors. Conversely, although Resilience is known as a psychological protective factor (Connor & Davidson, 2003), its influence is not particularly dominant in the context of working students. This is likely due to high external pressures such as academic loads, time constraints, and complex work demands.

Thus, the results of this visualization reinforce the finding that Emotion Regulation is a more significant factor in influencing the stress levels of working students compared to Resilience. Therefore, the development of emotion management skills becomes an important aspect in psychological intervention strategies to reduce stress levels in students who undertake dual roles between studies and word.

Discussion

This study examined the effects of emotional regulation and resilience on stress levels among working students. The results indicate that emotional regulation significantly reduces stress, whereas resilience shows no significant effect. The combined influence of both variables is also not significant, as reflected by the low coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.039$).

The findings support Gross's (1998) Emotion Regulation Process Model, which explains that the ability to identify and control emotional responses helps individuals maintain psychological stability under pressure. Students who can regulate emotions effectively tend to manage academic and occupational demands with less stress. This aligns with previous studies (Aldao et al., 2010; Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004) emphasizing that adaptive emotional regulation strategies are linked to reduced psychological strain.

Conversely, the insignificant role of resilience suggests that the ability to recover from adversity may not directly buffer stress in working students. This result corresponds with the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), implying that resilience requires external support such as adequate time management and social resources to be effective.

Scientifically, this research contributes to understanding the distinct mechanisms through which emotional regulation and resilience influence stress. Practically, it underscores the importance of integrating emotional regulation training such as mindfulness and cognitive restructuring into student development programs.

However, the low explanatory power indicates that other factors, including social support, coping strategies, and work-life balance, may play greater roles. Future research should adopt longitudinal designs to capture these dynamics more comprehensively.

In conclusion, emotional regulation serves as a key determinant of stress management among working students, whereas resilience alone is insufficient without supportive environmental conditions.

Conclusion

The study's main conclusions should be briefly outlined in the conclusion, emphasizing the contributions it has made to both the academic community and real-world applications. The limits of the study and suggestions for additional research may also be included by the authors.

By showing that emotional regulation serves as a crucial psychological mechanism in stress management across populations juggling academic and professional obligations, this research academically adds to the expanding body of literature on student mental health. By empirically verifying their applicability in the setting of dual-role students, it expands on established theories like Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Transactional Model of Stress and Coping and Gross's (1998) Emotion Regulation Process Model.

From a practical standpoint, the study emphasizes how crucial it is to incorporate emotional regulation training which includes emotional awareness, mindfulness, and cognitive restructuring into counseling and student development programs at universities. Students can benefit from such programs by being more emotionally adaptive, staying mentally stable, and performing better in school and at work. In the meantime, organizational and institutional support such as balanced academic workloads and flexible work schedules should be added to resilience-building initiatives.

The study contains a number of shortcomings in spite of its contributions. Numerous other aspects, including coping mechanisms, work-life balance, and social support, were not included in the model, as seen by the low explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.039$). Furthermore, self-reported data may induce bias, and the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to interpret causality.
In order to investigate the dynamic link between stress, resilience, and emotional regulation throughout time, future research should use mixed-method or longitudinal approaches. A more thorough knowledge of the factors that contribute to stress among working students might also be possible by include other variables, such as organizational climate, academic pressure, and social connectivity.

In conclusion, this study finds that while resilience by itself has no quantifiable effect in the absence of supportive contextual circumstances, emotional regulation is a major predictor of stress reduction. Therefore, enhancing institutional support networks and developing students' emotional management abilities are crucial tactics to support working students' mental health and wellbeing.

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