

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT AND JOB AUTONOMY ON THE LIFE SATISFACTION OF WORKING STUDENTS

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Abstract

Working students represent an increasingly significant population in higher education who often experience the dual pressures of academic and employment responsibilities. Managing these competing demands can lead to stress, fatigue, and a decline in overall life satisfaction, particularly when sufficient social support and job autonomy are lacking. In this context, understanding the key factors that enhance life satisfaction is crucial to improving the well-being of working students. This study aims to examine the influence of social support and job autonomy on life satisfaction among working students at Universitas Pamulang, Tangerang Selatan. Working students frequently struggle to balance their studies and work commitments, which can negatively affect their psychological well-being and satisfaction with life. Identifying the factors that contribute positively to their life satisfaction is therefore essential for developing effective support strategies. This research employed a quantitative approach using a survey method. Data were collected from 100 respondents through an online questionnaire (Google Form) distributed during October 2025. The instrument consisted of structured questions measuring three main variables, social support, job autonomy, and life satisfaction, using a five-point Likert scale. Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 27, including validity, reliability, classical assumption, and multiple regression tests. The results of the t-test indicate that social support ($t = 10.734$, $p = 0.000$) and job autonomy ($t = 3.142$, $p = 0.002$) both have a significant positive effect on life satisfaction among working students. The F-test ($F = 201.720$, $p = 0.000$) also demonstrates that both variables together significantly influence life satisfaction. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.802$) shows that 80.2% of the variance in life satisfaction is explained by social support and job autonomy, indicating their strong and meaningful contribution to the well-being of working students..

Keywords: Social support, job autonomy, life satisfaction, working students, motivation

Introduction

Working students represent a unique and increasingly significant group within the higher education system. These individuals balance the dual demands of academic

responsibilities and employment, often as a means to support their education or personal needs. While working provides financial benefits and opportunities for skill development, it can also create additional stress, fatigue, and challenges that may negatively impact overall well-being and life satisfaction (Wang, Li, & Coutts, 2022). Life satisfaction, defined as a cognitive evaluation of one's overall quality of life is a vital indicator of mental health and personal fulfillment. Therefore, identifying factors that enhance life satisfaction among working students is essential to promoting their well-being and academic success. Two critical factors that have consistently emerged in literature as influential to well-being are social support and job autonomy.

Social support refers to the perception or experience of being cared for, valued, and part of a supportive social network (Bi et al., 2021). It can originate from family, friends, peers, teachers, or supervisors. Research consistently shows that social support contributes positively to life satisfaction by buffering stress, enhancing resilience, and fostering a sense of belonging (Chang et al., 2023; Kalaitzaki et al., 2021). For instance, Bi et al. (2021) demonstrated that perceived support from family and teachers strongly correlates with higher life satisfaction among adolescents across 42 countries. Similarly, Landolfi et al. (2021) found that support from both family and colleagues enhances life satisfaction through improved work–family balance among Italian teachers. Moreover, studies like Mishra and Bharti (2024) reveal that in hybrid work settings, social support not only promotes work–life balance but also directly increases life satisfaction. For working students, who often juggle multiple responsibilities, social support may provide emotional reassurance, instrumental help, and a sense of stability that mitigates the pressures of dual roles.

Job autonomy, on the other hand, refers to the degree of freedom and discretion individuals have in carrying out their work tasks. It allows workers to make decisions, manage their time, and determine how to accomplish their goals (Zhang & He, 2022). High job autonomy is associated with increased intrinsic motivation, better job performance, and greater overall well-being (Steckermeier, 2021). Research by Zhang and He (2022) highlighted that job autonomy significantly enhances job satisfaction and reduces burnout among social workers, while Hämmig and Vetsch (2021) found that autonomy and supportive work environments protect against stress among healthcare professionals. Moreover, Hernández et al. (2022) demonstrated that autonomy support from lecturers improves students' intrinsic motivation and life satisfaction, suggesting that autonomy whether in academic or professional contexts, plays a vital role in psychological fulfillment. For working students, having autonomy in their jobs can reduce role strain and promote a sense of control and accomplishment, contributing to higher life satisfaction.

Several studies have also emphasized the interaction between social support and job autonomy in influencing well-being. Wang and Lei (2023) revealed that proactive personality predicts higher job satisfaction through the mediation of social support and hope, underscoring the importance of supportive and autonomous work environments. Similarly, Marcionetti and Castelli (2023) found that optimism, social support, and self-efficacy collectively enhance teachers' job and life satisfaction. These findings indicate that both internal and external resources such as social relationships

and job-related freedom, contribute synergistically to well-being outcomes. However, despite extensive research on general working populations, few studies have specifically examined how social support and job autonomy affect life satisfaction among working students, a group facing distinctive academic and occupational pressures.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence of social support and job autonomy on life satisfaction among working students at Universitas Pamulang, Tangerang Selatan. Understanding how these two factors contribute to students' well-being can provide valuable insights for educational institutions, employers, and policymakers in developing support systems that foster balance, motivation, and psychological health. By integrating findings from previous research, this study seeks to fill the existing gap by exploring the joint and individual effects of social support and job autonomy within the working student context. It is expected that higher levels of perceived social support and job autonomy will significantly and positively affect the life satisfaction of working students.

Theoretical Framework

Life satisfaction has been widely recognized as a crucial indicator of subjective well-being and psychological health. It reflects the extent to which individuals evaluate their overall quality of life positively. For working students, achieving life satisfaction can be particularly challenging because they must simultaneously manage academic demands and job responsibilities, often under time pressure and financial constraints. According to BI et al. (2021), social environments that provide emotional and instrumental support contribute significantly to higher life satisfaction. Similarly, Hernández et al. (2022) emphasized that supportive and autonomous learning or work contexts foster intrinsic motivation and enhance psychological well-being. These findings underscore the importance of both social and workplace factors in determining how working students perceive and experience satisfaction in life.

Social support is an essential external resource that helps individuals cope with stress and improve their emotional balance. It encompasses assistance from family, friends, peers, and colleagues, which can buffer the negative effects of multiple life demands (Chang et al., 2023). Research has consistently shown that social support is positively associated with greater happiness, resilience, and life satisfaction (Landolfi et al., 2021; Marcionetti & Castelli, 2023). For working students, social support from families and employers can provide both emotional reassurance and practical help, enabling them to manage time effectively and sustain academic motivation. Conversely, a lack of such support often leads to fatigue, burnout, and decreased satisfaction with life.

In addition to social factors, job autonomy represents a critical internal resource influencing well-being. Job autonomy refers to the degree of control individuals have over their work methods, schedules, and decisions (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Studies by Zhang and He (2022) and Steckermeier (2021) found that individuals who experience higher levels of autonomy at work tend to have greater motivation, lower burnout, and higher satisfaction with their lives. For working students, autonomy allows

flexibility in managing academic and occupational duties, which helps maintain balance and reduces role conflict. This sense of control and competence strengthens their intrinsic motivation and enhances their psychological health (Hernández et al., 2022).

When combined, social support and job autonomy create a reinforcing environment that promotes overall life satisfaction. Supportive social networks reduce emotional strain, while autonomy empowers individuals to make meaningful decisions that align with personal goals and values. Studies by Mishra and Bharti (2024) and Hämmig and Vetsch (2021) revealed that the interaction between external support and internal autonomy produces higher well-being and life satisfaction across diverse populations.

Based on the explanation above, the theoretical framework of this study can be illustrated in Figure 1, which presents the relationship between social support and job autonomy as the independent variables and life satisfaction as the dependent variable among working students at Universitas Pamulang. This framework illustrates how support from various sources and the level of autonomy in the workplace contribute to enhancing the overall life satisfaction of working students.

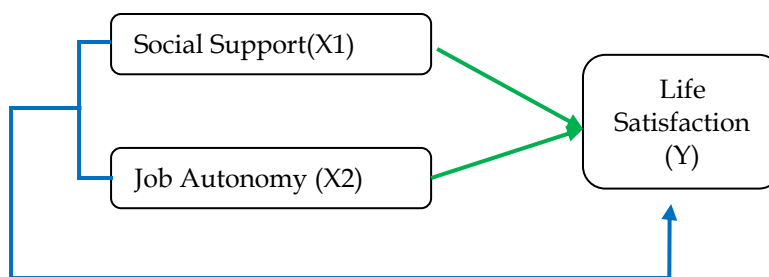


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Based on the conceptual model, the study presents the following hypotheses:

- H1: Social Support has a significant positive effect on life satisfaction among working students.
- H2: Job autonomy has a significant positive effect on life satisfaction among working students.
- H3: Social Support and Job autonomy simultaneously have a significant positive influence on the life satisfaction of working student.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research method with a survey design using an online questionnaire (Google Form) to systematically collect data from working students at Pamulang University, South Tangerang. The quantitative approach was chosen because it allows for an objective and measurable analysis of relationships between variables. The research instrument consisted of a structured questionnaire containing statements related to three main variables, social support, job autonomy, and life satisfaction measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to

5 = strongly agree). In addition, the questionnaire included demographic questions such as age, gender, type of work, and length of employment to provide a comprehensive profile of the respondents.

The questionnaire was distributed online to 100 respondents who were working students at Pamulang University, either part-time or full-time, during October 2025. Participation was voluntary, and an informed consent form was provided to each respondent to ensure research ethics and the confidentiality of personal data. After data collection, the analysis phase was conducted using SPSS software version 27. The analysis included descriptive statistics to describe the respondents' profiles and response trends, as well as multiple regression analysis to examine the influence of social support and job autonomy on the life satisfaction of working students. The results of this analysis are expected to provide empirical insights into the factors influencing the subjective well-being of students who work while pursuing their education.

Results

Based on the results of the study involving 100 working student respondents from Universitas Pamulang, the demographic characteristics show that the majority of respondents were aged 20–25 years (67%), followed by 26–30 years (17%), while those under 20 years and over 30 years each accounted for 8%. In terms of gender, male respondents dominated with 56%, while female respondents comprised 44%. This indicates that most working students are in a productive age range and at an early stage of their careers, where they are striving to balance both academic and professional responsibilities.

Regarding study programs, the majority of respondents came from the Management department (91%), while the rest were distributed across other majors such as Accounting (3%), Law (1%), Political Science (1%), Nursing (1%), and Education (3%). Based on employment status, 67% of respondents were employed full-time, and 33% worked part-time. This composition reflects that most students have substantial work commitments alongside their studies. These findings are important to analyze further, as both the level of work demands and the amount of social support received may influence their life satisfaction, with job autonomy potentially serving as a key factor in helping them maintain balance between academic and work-related roles.

1. Validity Test

Table 1. Validity Test (r table= 0.195)

Variable	Indicator	R stat	Result
Social Support (X1)	X1_1	0.411	Valid
	X1_2	0.6/0	Valid
	X1_3	0.429	Valid
	X1_4	0.592	Valid
	X1_5	0.518	Valid
	X1_6	0.570	Valid

Variable	Indicator	R stat	Result
	X1_7	0.680	Valid
Job Autonomy (X2)	X2_1	0.734	Valid
	X2_2	0.718	Valid
	X2_3	0.717	Valid
	X2_4	0.755	Valid
	X2_5	0.740	Valid
	X3_5	0.660	Valid
	X3_5	0.817	Valid
Life Satisfaction (Y)	Y1	0.766	Valid
	Y2	0.721	Valid
	Y3	0.673	Valid
	Y4	0.578	Valid
	Y5	0.637	Valid
	Y6	0.616	Valid

Source: SPSS 27, data processed (2025)

Based on the results in Table 1, all questionnaire indicators for the three variables, Social Support (X1), Job Autonomy (X2), and Life Satisfaction (Y), have r-count values greater than the r-table value (0.195), indicating that all items are valid. This means each statement in the questionnaire successfully measures what it is intended to measure. For the Social Support variable, r-count values range from 0.411 to 0.680, showing good item consistency. The Job Autonomy variable demonstrates even higher validity values, between 0.717 and 0.817, reflecting strong item correlations. Similarly, the Life Satisfaction variable has r-count values ranging from 0.578 to 0.766, confirming that all indicators accurately represent the construct being studied. Therefore, all items used in the questionnaire are valid and suitable for further analysis.

2. Reliability Test

Table 2. Reliability test

Variabel	Cronbach's Alpha	Result
Social Support (X1)	719 > 0.7	Reliable
Job Autonomy (X2)	857 > 0.7	Reliable
Life Satisfaction (Y)	748 > 0.7	Reliable

Source: SPSS 27, data processed (2025)

The reliability test results in Table 2 show that all variables have Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.7, which indicates that the research instruments are reliable and internally consistent. The Social Support variable obtained a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.719, the Job Autonomy variable achieved 0.857, and the Life Satisfaction variable recorded 0.748. According to reliability standards, values above 0.7 demonstrate that the measurement items within each variable consistently measure the same construct.

Thus, the questionnaire can be considered a reliable tool for analyzing the relationship between social support, job autonomy, and life satisfaction among working students

3. Classical Assumption Tests

a. Normality Test

Table 3. Normality Test (One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test)

Test Statistic	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) ^c
0.085	0,073

Source: SPSS 27, data processed (2025)

Based on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results in Table 3, the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.073, which is greater than the significance level of 0.05. This indicates that the residual data are normally distributed, fulfilling the assumption of normality required for regression analysis. Therefore, the model can proceed with further testing since the data distribution does not deviate significantly from normality.

b. Multicollinearity Test

Table 4. Multicollinearity Test

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Social Support (X1)	0.436	2.295
Job Autonomy (X2)	0.536	2.295

Source: SPSS 27, data processed (2025)

The results in Table 4 show that the Tolerance values for all independent variables are above 0.1 and the VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) values are below 10 (both at 2.295). This means there is no multicollinearity between the variables of social support (X1) and job autonomy (X2). Thus, the two independent variables are statistically independent and can be used together in the regression model without biasing the results.

c. Heteroscedasticity Test

Table 5. Heteroscedasticity Test

No.	t	Sig.
Social Support (X1)	1.037	.073
Job Autonomy (X2)	-.091	.139

Source: SPSS 27, data processed (2025)

As shown in Table 5, the significance (Sig.) values for both independent variables are greater than 0.05 (0.073 for X1 and 0.139 for X2). This indicates that there is no heteroscedasticity in the regression model. In other words, the variance of the residuals is consistent across observations, satisfying the assumption of homoscedasticity and ensuring that the regression results are reliable

d. Linearity Test

Table 6. Linearity Test

Variable	F	Statistic
(Combined)	35.136	.000
Linearity	400.008	.000
Deviation from Linearity	1.465	.062

Source: SPSS 27, data processed (2025)

According to Table 6, the linearity significance value is 0.000 (< 0.05), while the deviation from linearity value is 0.062 (> 0.05). These results indicate that there is a linear relationship between the independent variables (social support and job autonomy) and the dependent variable (life satisfaction). Therefore, the assumption of linearity is met, and it can be concluded that the regression model appropriately represents the linear relationship among the studied variables.

5. Regression Analysis

Table 7. Regression Analysis

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients B
(Constant)	-0.814
Social Support (X ₁)	0.825
Job Autonomy (X ₂)	0.159

Source: SPSS 27, data processed (2025)

Based on the multiple linear regression analysis, the obtained equation is:

$$Y = -0.815 + 0.825X_1 + 0.159X_2$$

Where:

Y = Life Satisfaction

X₁ = Social Support

X₂ = Job Autonomy

- 1) The constant value (B = -0.815) indicates that if both social support (X₁) and job autonomy (X₂) are assumed to be zero, the predicted value of life satisfaction would be -0.815. Although this value has no practical meaning (since satisfaction cannot be negative), it shows the baseline level of life satisfaction when the independent variables have no influence.
- 2) The coefficient for social support (B = 0.825) means that for every one-unit increase in social support, life satisfaction increases by 0.825 units, assuming job autonomy remains constant. This shows that social support has a strong and positive influence on the life satisfaction of working students.
- 3) The coefficient for job autonomy (B = 0.159) indicates that for every one-unit increase in job autonomy, life satisfaction increases by 0.159 units, assuming social support remains constant. This suggests that job autonomy also has a positive influence, although smaller than that of social support.

6. Hypothesis Testing

a. t-test

Table 8. t-test

Variabel	T=statistic	p-value
Social Support (X ₁)	10.734 > 1.984	0.000 < 0.05
Job Autonomy (X ₂)	3.142 > 1.984	0.002 < 0.05

Source: SPSS 26, data processed (2025)

To determine the effect of each independent variable on life satisfaction among working students, a t-test was performed at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. With a total sample size of $n = 100$ and $k = 2$ independent variables, the degrees of freedom (df) were calculated using the formula $df = n - k - 1 = 98$, resulting in a t-table value of 1.984.

The results of the analysis show that:

- 1) Social Support (X₁) has a t-statistic value of 10.734, which is greater than the t-table value (1.984), and a p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$. Therefore, H₁ is accepted, meaning that social support has a significant positive effect on life satisfaction among working students.
- 2) Job Autonomy (X₂) has a t-statistic value of $3.142 > 1.984$ and a p-value of $0.002 < 0.05$. Thus, H₂ is accepted, meaning that job autonomy also has a significant positive effect on life satisfaction among working students.

b. F-test

Table 9. F-test (F-table = 3,09)

Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-stat	p-value
654.159	327.079	201.720	.000 ^b

Source: SPSS 27, data processed (2025)

The results of the ANOVA (F-test) show that the calculated F-value is 201.720, which is greater than the F-table value of 3.09 (with degrees of freedom $df = 2; 97$). The significance value (Sig. = $0.000 < 0.05$) indicates that the overall regression model is statistically significant. This means that the independent variables, Social Support (X₁) and Job Autonomy (X₂), simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on Life Satisfaction (Y) among working students. Therefore, H₃ is accepted, confirming that both factors collectively contribute to improving life satisfaction in this population.

7. Coefficient of Determination (R²)

Table 10. Coefficient of Determination

R Square	Adjusted R Square
0.806	0.802

Source: SPSS 27, data processed (2025)

Based on the results of the coefficient of determination test in Table 10, the Adjusted R Square value is 0.802, which means that 80.2% of the variation in life satisfaction among working students can be explained by the two independent variables, namely social support (X₁) and job autonomy (X₂). The remaining 19.8% is

influenced by other factors not included in this research model. This indicates that social support and job autonomy together have a strong and significant influence on life satisfaction among working students at Universitas Pamulang.

Discussion

The results of this study reveal that social support and job autonomy significantly and positively influence life satisfaction among working students at Universitas Pamulang. These findings align with the theoretical framework and previous empirical studies, confirming that both external (social) and internal (autonomy) factors play critical roles in enhancing the overall well-being of individuals who simultaneously manage academic and professional responsibilities.

First, the analysis shows that social support (X_1) has a strong positive effect on life satisfaction, as indicated by a t-statistic value of 10.734 and a significance level of 0.000 (<0.05). This result supports the hypothesis that individuals who receive emotional and instrumental assistance from family, friends, colleagues, or lecturers are more likely to feel content and balanced in life. Consistent with the findings of Bi et al. (2021), social support from family and peers contributes substantially to an individual's sense of fulfillment and happiness. Likewise, Landolfi et al. (2021) demonstrated that family and supervisor support positively affect well-being through improved work-life balance. In the context of working students, the availability of social support reduces stress, increases motivation to study, and strengthens coping mechanisms when facing dual academic and work pressures. Moreover, Chang et al. (2023) highlighted that social support not only enhances life satisfaction but also mitigates depressive symptoms, emphasizing its essential role in maintaining mental health.

Second, the findings show that job autonomy (X_2) significantly affects life satisfaction, with a t-statistic value of 3.142 and a p-value of 0.002 (<0.05). This supports the notion that greater freedom and control at work foster a sense of competence, responsibility, and self-efficacy, which in turn elevate life satisfaction. As Zhang and He (2022) noted, job autonomy helps reduce burnout and increase job satisfaction among employees by giving them control over how tasks are executed. Similarly, Steckermeier (2021) found that autonomy enhances well-being by enabling individuals to make meaningful choices aligned with their personal values. For working students, autonomy allows flexibility in managing work hours and academic commitments, reducing role conflict and stress. This flexibility provides a sense of empowerment and intrinsic motivation, as emphasized by Hernández et al. (2022), who found that autonomy support fosters intrinsic motivation and life satisfaction among students.

Furthermore, the F-test results indicate that social support and job autonomy simultaneously have a significant and positive impact on life satisfaction ($F = 201.720$, $\text{Sig.} = 0.000 < 0.05$). This finding confirms that both variables interact synergistically in improving students' well-being. It aligns with Mishra and Bharti (2024), who found that social support and job-related flexibility jointly promote work-life balance and happiness. Together, these two factors create an environment where working students

feel supported externally while maintaining internal control over their work and study responsibilities.

The coefficient of determination (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.802$) further reinforces these results, showing that 80.2% of the variation in life satisfaction can be explained by social support and job autonomy. This indicates a strong predictive power of the model. The remaining 19.8% may be attributed to other psychological or contextual factors, such as resilience, financial stability, personality traits, or academic workload (as suggested by Azañedo et al., 2021; Wang & Lei, 2023).

In conclusion, the findings demonstrate that both social support and job autonomy are essential determinants of life satisfaction among working students. When students receive consistent emotional and practical support from their social environment and are given sufficient control over their work, they experience greater well-being and life satisfaction. This implies that institutions and employers should foster supportive networks and promote job flexibility to enhance the quality of life for working students.

Conclusion

The researcher would like to express sincere gratitude to all respondents from Universitas Pamulang who willingly participated in this study and provided valuable data through the questionnaire. Special thanks are also extended to the university's academic staff and supervisors for their guidance and constructive feedback throughout the research process. Appreciation is given to family and friends for their continuous encouragement and support, which made the completion of this study possible.

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