WORK-LIFE BALANCE STRATEGIES FOR STUDENT ENTREPRENEURS FACING MULTI-DIMENSIONAL DISASTERS AND CLIMATE CHANGE CHALLENGES.

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Abstract

This study focuses on work-life balance strategies among student employees who are also entrepreneurs, facing multi-dimensional challenges caused by disasters and climate change. This qualitative research employs a case study approach to gain an in-depth understanding of individuals' experiences and adaptive strategies in managing multiple roles simultaneously. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, involving five active students who work and run businesses, plus one key informant to enhance data validity. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using source triangulation techniques. The results reveal five work-life balance indicators present in all informants: time management strategies, social support, adaptation to environmental and climate changes, maintenance of mental and physical health, and technological integration. This indicates that student employees who are entrepreneurs demonstrate strong adaptive abilities to maintain balance between academic activities, work, and business amidst dynamic global challenges

Keywords: Work-life balance, Student employees, Entrepreneurs, Climate change, Case study

Introduction

In the current era of globalization and multi-dimensional disruption, balancing personal life and work has become an increasingly complex issue, especially for individuals with multiple roles such as student employees who are also entrepreneurs. This group faces layered demands on time, energy, and responsibility as students, workers, and business actors alike. Work-life balance is not merely a matter of time management but also involves psychological, social, and environmental dimensions that collectively influence holistic individual well-being.

The rise in the number of students who work while running businesses reflects a paradigm shift in education and employment. These student employees are not only focused on academic achievement but also strive to achieve financial independence and develop entrepreneurial skills amid global competition.

Nevertheless, heavy workloads often create pressures that can disrupt the balance between academic, professional, and personal life (Drianus et al., 2021).

Externally, challenges such as disasters and climate change further complicate the lives of student employees who are entrepreneurs. Climate change, causing weather uncertainty, natural disasters, and economic supply chain disruptions, directly impacts the sustainability of small businesses run by students. Those working in informal or field-based sectors face disruptions from floods, forest fires, or energy crises that affect income and productivity. This situation demands adaptive strategies that are economic but also focus on mental resilience, social strength, and efficient time and resource management.

Additionally, rapid digital technology development has a dual impact. On one hand, technology facilitates student employees who are entrepreneurs to manage activities efficiently via online systems and flexible work arrangements. On the other hand, digitalization causes digital fatigue due to constant connectivity and responsiveness demands, worsening imbalances between professional and personal life, and increasing stress and reduced productivity (Febreza & Junaidi, 2022).

Work-life balance is increasingly relevant for study because it directly relates to quality of life and sustainable individual productivity. Effective strategies must account for unique characteristics of student employees who are entrepreneurs, such as limited time, financial resources, and social responsibilities. Hence, research on work-life balance strategies for this group is vital to provide comprehensive insight into challenges and adaptive steps to face multi-dimensional disaster and climate change impacts.

This study aims to analyze strategies used by student employees who are entrepreneurs to maintain work-life balance amid environmental, social, and economic pressures caused by climate change and disasters. The results are expected to contribute to the development of education, employment, and entrepreneurship policies responsive to global dynamics and oriented towards sustainable human well-being

Theoretical Framework

Work-life balance is defined as when an individual can harmoniously manage work and personal life demands without interference. This concept grows alongside awareness of mental and social well-being importance in the modern work world. According to human resource management experts, work-life balance is not only measured by time but also by an individual's satisfaction and emotional involvement with both aspects. When someone manages professional responsibilities while fulfilling personal and social needs, they achieve optimal balance. Conversely, imbalance triggers stress, emotional exhaustion, and productivity decline.

Student employees who are entrepreneurs face complex work-life situations, juggling roles as students, workers, and business actors. This demands high capability in time, energy, and priority management. Role conflict theory explains that individuals with multiple roles face inter-role conflicts causing psychological pressure when demands from one role clash with another, such as academic obligations overlapping with job or entrepreneurial activities. Without adaptive

strategies, imbalance risks affect academic performance, work productivity, and business sustainability.

In the climate change and disaster context, resilience theory explains individuals' ability to face unpredictable external pressures. Climate change causes socio-economic and psychological uncertainties affecting student entrepreneurs. High resilience helps maintain mental and emotional balance when facing disturbances like natural disasters, energy crises, or economic fluctuations. Resilient individuals adapt better in strategizing work, using digital opportunities, and maintaining social and mental health amid stress.

Subjective well-being theory also underpins understanding of work-life balance. It involves individual evaluation of life satisfaction, happiness, and meaning from daily activities. Student employees capable of emotional balance between work, study, and social life tend to have higher subjective well-being. Balance is not only proportional time division but how individuals find meaning, satisfaction, and sustainable motivation across various life roles (Astuti & Nurwidawati, 2023).

Practically, achieving work-life balance involves self-management: time management, priority setting, self-discipline, and stress management. Student employees need flexible scheduling, digital tools for efficiency, and mental and physical health maintenance through balanced lifestyle. Environmental adaptability, especially under disaster and climate change impacts, is also crucial in sustaining productivity without sacrificing personal well-being. Thus, work-life balance theories and practices must integrate psychological, social, economic, and environmental aspects to form effective resilience strategies

Method

This qualitative case study approach aims for deep understanding of work-life balance strategies used by student employees who are entrepreneurs amid multi-dimensional disaster and climate change challenges. The research explores meanings, experiences, and adaptive strategies of subjects managing multiple simultaneous life roles.

The research location was conducted both online and offline with several entrepreneurial student employees in the area around Pamulang University. Informants were purposively selected based on criteria: active students working part-time or full-time, running active entrepreneurial activities for at least six months, and experiencing indirect disaster or climate impact on their business. Five main informants agreed to in-depth interviews.

Data collection involved semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions focusing on individual strategies balancing work, study, and personal life. Dimensions explored included time management, social support, adaptation to environmental changes, and responses to disaster and climate uncertainty. Interview transcripts were compiled digitally for descriptive qualitative analysis involving data reduction, narrative presentation, and interpretive conclusion drawing.

For validity, source triangulation compared interview responses and literature on work-life balance, climate change, and entrepreneurship. The researcher acted as the main instrument observing social and psychological context. Data processing identified strategic patterns, support and inhibiting factors, and practical implications for student employees balancing multiple responsibilities amid disaster and climate challenges

Results and Discussion

After conducting semi-structured interviews with five main informants, which were then confirmed with key informants, the research results were as follows:

a. Time Management Strategy

Based on the interview results, it can be seen that all informants had difficulties in dividing their time between college, work, and the business they run. However, most of them have already implemented fairly planned time management strategies, such as making daily schedules, setting priorities, and even using digital technology as a tool to manage activities. They realize that without proper time planning, all the roles they play will conflict with each other and cause physical and mental fatigue.

Some informants expressed:

"*Personally, I usually make a daily schedule. Morning is for work, afternoon for college, and night for handling online orders. Sometimes I get tired, but if I don't schedule it, everything can get chaotic...*" (R1, 081024)

"*I use a digital calendar to manage tasks and work schedules. It's so that it doesn't conflict with college and business meetings.*" (R2, 101024)

"*I usually decide what is most important first. During exam season, I temporarily let my friends handle my business.*" (R3, 131024)

This statement is reinforced by informants 4 and 5, who also emphasize the importance of consistency and decisiveness in setting priorities. They mentioned that rest time is often sacrificed to complete important tasks. This indicates that time management skills become a key adaptive strategy employed by student employees who run businesses to maintain the balance of their activitiesIn presenting the results, tables and figures must be numbered consecutively according to their appearance in the text. The title of each table should be placed above the table and centered. Conversely, the title of each figure should be written below the figure and centered. All tables and figures must be referenced in the text to ensure consistency between the description and the data presented.

Key informants emphasized that students who are able to make realistic and flexible time plans usually have lower stress levels compared to those who work without planning.

"*…from what I see, most students who work while running a business have good time management skills, but there are still many who get exhausted because they don't have time to rest. So this actually needs to be managed more wisely…*" (IK, 181024).

According to Sopian (2022), effective time management allows a person to minimize role conflicts, improve efficiency, and maintain a balance between

academic demands, work, and personal life. Thus, time management is not just a technical skill, but also a form of self-control over the various pressures of a multi-role life.

b. Social Support Strategies

Interview results indicate that social support is an important component in maintaining the work-life balance of student employees. The support referred to includes emotional, practical, and moral support from family, campus friends, colleagues, and the business communities they join.

Most informants stated that the role of family is very helpful in sustaining daily activities, whether in the form of direct assistance or moral support. For example, parents help by taking care of the shop or giving advice to stay focused on college. Meanwhile, campus friends and colleagues often become sources of support by helping each other when tasks pile up or class schedules conflict.

As expressed by several informants:

"If it weren't for my family's support, I probably would have given up. Because my parents often help run the shop while I attend college." (R1, 081024)

"I have campus friends who often help promote my products on social media. So it's really helpful." (R2, 101024)

"I feel lighter because there is support from my coworkers. Sometimes when I have to take leave for college, they take turns helping out at work." (R3, 131024)

These combined statements indicate that the presence of a supportive social environment is one of the strengthening factors in managing various responsibilities. The key informant also added that students with strong social networks tend to be more resilient to psychological pressure.

"…indeed, this social support is really important, because they can help each other, keep each other motivated, so that it is not easy to get stressed while managing work, college, and business…" (KI, 181024)

According to (Sugeardhana & Budiani, 2023), social support functions as a buffer against stress (stress buffer), which can increase motivation, reduce emotional fatigue, and strengthen individuals' sense of social attachment when facing multi-role challenges.

c. Adaptation Strategies to Environmental and Climate Change

From the interview results, it was found that most informants experienced indirect impacts of climate change on their business activities. These impacts included decreased market demand, difficulties in obtaining raw materials, and disruptions in the distribution chain. The informants then developed adaptation strategies, such as adjusting products, utilizing digital marketing, and seeking alternative sources of materials.

Some informants expressed:

"During the rainy season, my sales drop a lot because customers rarely go out." (R1, 081024)

"I run a culinary business, and during the last flood, it was very hard to get raw materials. So I changed the menu to use available ingredients." (R2, 101024)

"I run an online fashion business, so in extreme weather, deliveries are usually delayed. I anticipate this by giving bonuses to customers to keep them buying." (R3, 131024)

From this information, it can be concluded that adaptive capability is part of a business sustainability strategy as well as a form of psychological resilience in facing environmental uncertainty. The informants also showed a positive attitude toward change, by making work patterns more flexible and relying on digital media as a solution.

A key informant added:

"…most of them are already aware of the need to be adaptive, but guidance is still necessary to be better prepared to face environmental risks, especially for those who run small businesses." (IK, 181024)

According to (McGray et al. 2007), such adaptive strategies reflect the application of resilience principles, which emphasize individuals' ability to endure, adapt, and grow amid environmental and economic pressures caused by climate change and disasters.

d. Mental and Physical Health Maintenance Strategies

Based on the results of the interviews, all informants emphasized that maintaining physical and mental health is an important aspect of achieving work-life balance. Many of them realized that the dual burden of work, studies, and business often leads to physical fatigue and emotional stress. Therefore, they implement strategies such as taking regular breaks, light exercise, recreation, and seeking emotional support from close ones.

The informants' statements illustrate this:

"If I'm really exhausted, I make sure to rest first before continuing work. Forcing myself would only increase stress." (R1, 081024)

"I have a habit of doing light exercise every morning so that my body doesn't easily get worn out." (R2, 101024)

"If I feel stressed from college and work, I take a break from selling for a day or two." (R4, 151024)

They also added that maintaining mental balance is not merely about avoiding stress, but also about training self-awareness to stay focused and motivated. In this context, they employ various methods, such as journaling, meditation, and limiting social media use to prevent digital fatigue.

A key informant emphasized:

"…we also encourage students not to just focus on productivity, but also to take care of their mental health. Because if they experience burnout, all of their activities could be disrupted." (KI, 181024)

According to (Zuraini et al., 2023), physical and mental health are directly related to a person's level of productivity and life satisfaction. Individuals with emotional balance and stable physical conditions are more capable of navigating multi-role demands effectively.

e. Integration of Technology in Maintaining Balance

The interview results showed that all informants utilize digital technology to facilitate work, manage businesses, and support academic processes. They use

various applications such as digital calendars, e-commerce platforms, and financial tools to monitor business activities. However, on the other hand, the high intensity of digital device use also leads to fatigue and psychological stress, known as digital fatigue.

As explained by several informants:

"*Technology really helps, but sometimes it makes me tired because I always have to be online.*" (R1, 081024)

"*I use financial applications to manage business cash flow, but it often means working overtime to input data.*" (R2, 101024)

"*If I stay in front of the laptop all the time, my head feels heavy. But I can't avoid it either.*" (R3, 131024)

This situation shows that although technology provides efficiency, excessive use actually has the potential to disrupt life balance. Therefore, the informants try to limit screen time and schedule specific periods without gadgets as a form of digital detox.

A key informant concluded:

"*...technology is important, but its use must still be controlled. If not, it can cause stress and disrupt the balance between work and life.*" (KI, 181024)

Conclusion

Based on the analysis that has been conducted, it can be concluded that the five indicators of work-life balance strategies are reflected in entrepreneurial student-workers. Regarding the time management indicator, all informants strive to organize their schedules diligently, although they still experience fatigue due to intensive activities. On the social support indicator, family, friends, and colleagues play an important role in maintaining motivation and reducing pressure. In terms of adaptation to environmental and climate changes, the informants demonstrate the ability to adjust through innovation and the use of digital media to ensure their business continues. Regarding the maintenance of mental and physical health, they strive to maintain balance by resting, exercising, and managing stress. As for the technology integration indicator, all informants utilize technology for work and business efficiency while remaining aware of the risks of digital fatigue. Overall, the strategies implemented reflect a good adaptive capability in facing the multi-dimensional challenges of academic life, work, and entrepreneurship simultaneously.

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