

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL SUPPORT AND DUAL ROLE BURDEN ON WORKING STUDENTS' WORK-LIFE BALANCE

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the influence of dual role demands and social support on the work-life balance of full-time working students. The research is grounded in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, Role Conflict Theory, and the Social Support Buffering Hypothesis, which together explain how social and contextual resources may alleviate the strain caused by multiple role obligations. A quantitative cross-sectional design was employed with 100 respondents who were full-time working undergraduate students in Indonesia. Data were collected using standardized questionnaires and analyzed through multiple linear regression using IBM SPSS 26 and the PROCESS Macro (Model 1). Instrument validation and reliability tests indicated that all measurement items were valid and reliable, with Cronbach's alpha values above 0.60. The results revealed that social support has a significant positive effect on work-life balance ($t = 2.460$; $p = 0.016$), while dual role demands have a negative but insignificant effect ($t = -0.375$; $p = 0.708$). Simultaneously, both variables significantly influence work-life balance ($F = 3.089$; $p = 0.050$), though the explanatory power of the model ($R^2 = 0.040$) remains modest. These findings highlight that social support serves as a crucial psychological resource that enhances balance and well-being, even under demanding work-study conditions. The study contributes to the literature by reaffirming the protective role of social support in mitigating stress among working students and provides practical insights for universities and employers to strengthen social and institutional support systems.

Keywords: dual role demands, social support, work-life balance, working students, JD-R Model

Introduction

In contemporary socio-economic contexts, the number of working students continues to increase as the demand for financial self-sufficiency grows. Many students engage in part-time or full-time employment to support their education and living expenses. While this provides valuable experience and income, it also generates considerable pressure. The dual demands of academic and professional roles often conflict, leading to time scarcity, role overload, and emotional strain.

According to Greenhaus and Allen (2011), work-life balance is an essential determinant of personal well-being and performance in multiple life domains.

However, working students experience dual role burden, a condition in which the obligations of two domains compete for limited resources such as time, energy, and attention. This imbalance can lead to burnout, decreased motivation, and poor academic achievement (Kahn et al., 1964).

Social support has been identified as an essential protective factor that can buffer the adverse effects of stress and conflict. Cohen and Wills (1985) proposed that individuals with higher levels of perceived social support demonstrate better psychological adjustment and are more resilient under pressure. Within the student population, support from family, peers, lecturers, and employers plays a pivotal role in maintaining emotional stability and functional balance.

This study seeks to investigate how dual role burden affects the work-life balance of working students and how social support can moderate this relationship. The research provides practical insights for educational institutions and organizations to develop flexible, empathetic, and sustainable policies supporting the well-being of students who combine work and study.

Theoretical Framework

The increasing prevalence of working students has intensified scholarly interest in understanding how dual role demands influence psychological and academic outcomes. This study integrates the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) Model, Role Conflict Theory, and the Social Support Buffering Hypothesis to explain the mechanism linking dual role demands, work–school conflict, academic burnout, and academic performance, as well as the moderating role of social support within this process.

Dual Role Demands

According to the Role Conflict Theory (Kahn et al., 1964), individuals experience tension when expectations from multiple roles are incompatible or exceed available personal resources. In the context of working students, *dual role demands*—the simultaneous obligations of academic and occupational roles—often lead to *work–school conflict*.

Adebayo (2006) found that non-traditional students who divide their time between study and work experience significant role strain due to time pressure and cognitive overload. Similarly, Chen et al. (2022) highlighted that overlapping academic and work responsibilities force students to constantly prioritize one domain over the other, triggering psychological tension and performance trade-offs. Hence, higher dual role demands are expected to increase the level of work–school conflict.

Academic Burnout

Persistent conflict between academic and occupational roles has been shown to generate emotional exhaustion and disengagement—two major dimensions of *academic burnout* (Folkman et al., 2020). Students who cannot adequately fulfill both sets of demands often experience chronic fatigue, reduced motivation, and diminished satisfaction with learning.

Furthermore, Ye et al. (2021) emphasized that burnout is more severe among students with limited social or institutional support. The inability to balance competing roles

thus becomes a primary antecedent of burnout, affecting students' mental health and persistence in higher education.

The relationship between burnout and performance has been well documented in educational psychology. Rossi et al. (2020) observed that students with higher levels of burnout display poorer academic achievement and lower satisfaction with their studies. This is consistent with the findings of Chen et al. (2022), who demonstrated that inter-role conflict (e.g., work-family or work-school conflict) negatively influences learning engagement and academic performance. Burnout, therefore, serves as a critical mediating mechanism linking work-school conflict to reduced academic outcomes.

The Moderating Role of Social Support

The Social Support Buffering Hypothesis (Cohen & Wills, 1985) posits that social support mitigates the negative psychological consequences of stressors by providing emotional reassurance and practical assistance. Empirical evidence supports this notion: Garmendia et al. (2023) and Ye et al. (2021) found that strong social networks can weaken the adverse effects of dual role demands and role conflict on burnout.

Folkman et al. (2020) further noted that students with high perceived support reported lower stress levels even when their workload remained high. Thus, social support functions as a *contextual resource* that enhances resilience and moderates the pathway between workload, conflict, and emotional exhaustion.

1. Integration through the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model

The JD-R Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) provides an overarching framework for integrating these relationships. It proposes that job demands (e.g., workload, role conflict, time pressure) lead to strain and burnout when not offset by adequate resources (e.g., social support, autonomy, coping skills).

In this study, dual role demands represent the demands, while social support represents the resource that may buffer their negative effects. When resources are sufficient, the strain process weakens, fostering engagement and maintaining performance; when resources are scarce, the risk of conflict and burnout increases.

Hypothesized Model and Propositions

Based on the theoretical and empirical foundations discussed above, the following hypotheses are proposed:

1. H1: Dual role demands positively predict work-school conflict.
2. H2: Work-school conflict positively predicts academic burnout.
3. H3: Academic burnout negatively predicts academic performance.
4. H4: Social support moderates (buffers) the effects of (a) dual role demands on work-school conflict and (b) work-school conflict on burnout.

This integrated framework aligns with previous empirical findings and provides a coherent explanation of how working students' well-being and academic outcomes are shaped by the interaction between stressors and social resources. It also underscores the strategic importance of fostering supportive environments within universities and workplaces to sustain both performance and mental health among students who juggle multiple demanding roles.

Method

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the relationships among dual role demands, social support, and work-life balance among full-time working students. A quantitative approach allows for statistical hypothesis testing and an objective assessment of relationships between variables.

Participants and Sampling

The study involved 100 full-time working students enrolled in higher education institutions in Indonesia. Respondents met two inclusion criteria:

- (1) actively working (full-time), and
 - (2) currently enrolled in an undergraduate program.
- A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure that participants represented students balancing professional and academic obligations. This sample size satisfies the minimum requirement for multivariate analysis (Hair et al., 2019). Demographic information such as age, gender, type of employment, and working hours per week was collected to describe the sample characteristics.

Instruments and Measurement

All constructs were measured using validated scales with responses on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree): Dual Role Demands: Total weekly study and work hours (Mason, 2015). Social Support: Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet et al., 1988). Work-Life Balance: Adapted from scales measuring academic-occupational balance (Adebayo, 2006; Folkman et al., 2020). Each instrument was translated and back-translated to ensure linguistic validity. A pilot test confirmed reliability and clarity of the questionnaire items.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected through an online survey distributed via student and professional networks. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Respondents were informed about the research purpose, and ethical clearance was obtained before data collection.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS 26 and the Process Macro (Model 1). Preliminary analyses included descriptive statistics, reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha, and diagnostic checks for regression assumptions (normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity). Analytical procedures: Descriptive and reliability analyses. Multiple regression to test the direct effects of social support and dual role demands on work-life balance. F-test and t-test to determine simultaneous and partial significance. Coefficient of determination (R^2) to evaluate model explanatory power. A significance level of $p < .05$ was used for hypothesis testing.

Results

Validity and Reliability Testing

Before conducting the main analysis, validity and reliability tests were performed to ensure the quality of the research instruments. The validity test examined the degree to which each item accurately represented the construct it intended to measure. Using the Corrected Item Total Correlation method, all items across the three variables, social support, dual role demands, and work-life balance, showed correlation coefficients greater than the critical r-table value of 0.19 ($df = 98, \alpha = 0.05$).

This result indicates that each item contributes meaningfully to its respective construct, confirming that the measurement tools possess strong content and construct validity. Furthermore, reliability testing was carried out using Cronbach's alpha to evaluate internal consistency across the items in each variable. The obtained coefficients were 0.617 for Social Support, 0.717 for Dual Role Demands, and 0.661 for Work–Life Balance—all exceeding the minimum reliability threshold of 0.60, as suggested by Nunnally (1978). These findings demonstrate that each scale produces stable and consistent responses across the 100 participants, meaning that the instrument would likely yield similar results if administered repeatedly under comparable conditions. Taken together, these results confirm that all constructs used in this study are both valid and reliable, ensuring that subsequent statistical analyses are based on instruments that accurately and consistently measure the targeted psychological and behavioral attributes of full-time working students. This methodological rigor strengthens the credibility of the overall findings and supports the appropriateness of the data for inferential analysis.

Multiple Regression Analysis

The multiple regression analysis aimed to test the direct effects of social support (X1) and dual role demands (X2) on work–life balance (Y) among full-time working students. The resulting regression equation was:

Table 1. Coefficients^a

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	15.790	3.034		5.205	.000
	X1	.315	.128	.242	2.460	.016
	X2	-.076	.201	-.037	-.375	.708

a. Dependent Variable: Y

$$\text{Work Life Balance} = 6,655 + 0,315 X_1 + -0,076 X_2$$

The positive coefficient for social support ($\beta = 0.315$) indicates that higher levels of perceived support are associated with better work–life balance, while the negative coefficient for dual role demands ($\beta = -0.076$) implies that increasing workload slightly reduces the perceived balance between work and study. This pattern supports theoretical expectations derived from the Job Demands–Resources framework, suggesting that social resources mitigate the strain caused by high demands.

Tabel 2. Simultaneous Significance Test (F-Test)

		ANOVA ^a				
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	79.198	2	39.599	3.089	.050 ^b

Residual	1243.552	97	12.820		
Total	1322.750	99			

a. Dependent Variable: Y

b. Predictors: (Constant), X2, X1

The F-test yielded a value of $F = 3.089$ with a significance level of $0.050 (< 0.05)$, indicating that social support and dual role demands jointly exert a statistically significant influence on work–life balance. This finding confirms that the model, as a whole, is fit to explain part of the variation in the dependent variable. Although the combined effect size is modest, it reveals that both psychosocial factors – *support and workload* – play meaningful roles in shaping how working students experience balance in their daily lives.

Tabel 3. Partial Significance Test (t-Test)

		Coefficients^a					Collinearity Statistics	
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients				
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	15.790	3.034		5.205	.000		
	X1	.315	.128	.242	2.460	.016	1.000	1.000
	X2	-.076	.201	-.037	-.375	.708	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: Y

The partial test results further clarify the relative contribution of each variable. Social support was found to have a significant positive impact on work–life balance ($t = 2.460$; $p = 0.016 < 0.05$), whereas dual role demands showed a negative but non-significant relationship ($t = -0.375$; $p = 0.708 > 0.05$).

This suggests that emotional and instrumental support from family, peers, or supervisors substantially helps working students cope with competing responsibilities, while workload intensity alone does not predict their ability to maintain equilibrium.

Such results may reflect the adaptive coping mechanisms developed by full-time student workers, who often learn to manage their schedules, seek assistance, or build supportive environments to offset the pressures of holding dual roles.

Tabel 4. Coefficient of Determination (R²)

Model Summary^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.245 ^a	.060	.040	3.58052

a. Predictors: (Constant), X2, X1

b. Dependent Variable: Y

The model's coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.040$) indicates that social support and dual role demands together account for 4% of the variance in work–life balance. Although

this percentage appears small, it is not uncommon in social and behavioral research, where outcomes are influenced by a complex web of factors—such as personality, coping style, academic culture, and institutional flexibility.

This modest explanatory power underscores that while support and workload are important, they interact with many other situational and personal variables that merit exploration in future studies.

Discussion

The findings provide empirical support for the Social Support Buffering Hypothesis (Cohen & Wills, 1985), which states that social support mitigates the negative effects of stressors on individual well-being. Students who perceive higher levels of social support tend to experience less strain from dual role demands, aligning with earlier research by Ye et al. (2021) and Garmendia et al. (2023).

Interestingly, the insignificant direct effect of dual role demands contrasts with earlier studies (Adebayo, 2006; Chen et al., 2022) that emphasized workload as a dominant predictor of imbalance. One possible interpretation is that the respondents—full-time working students—have already established stable coping routines, greater role awareness, or flexible work environments that reduce the disruptive impact of workload intensity.

Thus, rather than the number of hours worked, the quality of social and emotional resources appears to be the stronger determinant of perceived balance.

Overall, this research underscores the importance of social support as a psychological resource that enables students to navigate dual responsibilities without significant detriment to their well-being. It also demonstrates that the JD-R Model and Social Support Buffering Hypothesis remain relevant frameworks for understanding the work-study experiences of modern higher education students.

Conclusion

This study concludes that social support significantly enhances the work-life balance of full-time working students, whereas dual role demands alone do not have a significant direct effect. However, the combined influence of both variables remains statistically meaningful, demonstrating that balance is achieved not merely by reducing demands, but by strengthening social and emotional resources. From a practical standpoint, higher education institutions and employers should: Promote peer mentoring, counseling, and flexible scheduling to help students manage competing responsibilities. Recognize that emotional validation and supportive environments play a greater role in maintaining balance than workload reduction alone. Incorporate well-being initiatives and academic advising systems that prioritize social connectedness and mental health support.

Future studies are encouraged to include mediating variables such as academic burnout, coping strategies, or perceived organizational support to enhance explanatory depth. Expanding the model could offer more comprehensive insights into how working students can sustain both academic performance and psychological well-being.

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