

**THE ROLE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT IN ACHIEVING WORK-LIFE BALANCE: A STUDY OF  
STUDENTS WORKING IN THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Working students face challenges in balancing academic demands with the jobs they do to meet financial needs or gain practical experience. This study aims to explore the role of social support in helping students who work in the food and beverage industry in Samarinda City achieve a balance between work and academic life. This study employs a qualitative research design with a descriptive approach to explore the role of social support in achieving work-life balance among students working in the food and beverage (F&B) industry in Samarinda City. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth understanding of participants' life experiences, perceptions, and social interactions within their educational and work environments. The research subjects consist of three informants, all of whom are students working part-time in the food and beverage industry. Two informants work as baristas, while one informant works as kitchen staff in local cafes and restaurants in Samarinda City. The informants were selected using purposive sampling, a sampling technique commonly used in qualitative research to select individuals who have relevant experience and can provide rich and in-depth information related to the research problem selection. Subjects were based on several considerations. First, students working in the F&B sector often face irregular working hours, customer service demands, and performance pressures, making them prone to experiencing conflicts between work and study. The results of the study show that working students apply careful time management strategies to maintain a balance between their studies and work. Social support, whether from family, friends, or self-support, proved to play an important role in reducing stress and improving their well-being. Although challenges such as difficulty in managing time and heavy academic workloads remain, the emotional and practical support provided by the surrounding environment is very helpful in achieving this. This research provides insights into the importance of social support in managing the work-life balance of working students, as well as its contribution to their well-being and academic success.*

**Keywords:** Students working, social support, work-life balance, time management

**ABSTRAK**

*Mahasiswa yang bekerja menghadapi tantangan dalam menyeimbangkan tuntutan akademik dengan pekerjaan yang mereka jalani untuk memenuhi kebutuhan finansial atau memperoleh pengalaman praktis. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi peran dukungan sosial dalam membantu mahasiswa yang bekerja di industri makanan dan minuman di Kota Samarinda untuk mencapai keseimbangan antara kehidupan kerja dan kehidupan akademik. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif untuk menelusuri peran dukungan sosial dalam mencapai work-life balance di kalangan mahasiswa yang bekerja di industri makanan dan minuman (F&B) di Kota Samarinda. Pendekatan kualitatif dipilih karena memungkinkan peneliti memperoleh pemahaman yang mendalam mengenai pengalaman hidup, persepsi, dan interaksi sosial para partisipan dalam lingkungan pendidikan dan pekerjaan mereka. Subjek penelitian terdiri atas tiga informan, yang semuanya merupakan mahasiswa yang bekerja paruh waktu di industri makanan dan minuman. Dua informan bekerja sebagai barista, sedangkan satu informan lainnya bekerja sebagai staf dapur di kafe dan restoran lokal di Kota Samarinda. Para informan dipilih menggunakan teknik purposive sampling, yaitu teknik pengambilan sampel yang lazim digunakan dalam penelitian kualitatif untuk memilih individu yang memiliki pengalaman relevan dan mampu memberikan informasi yang kaya serta mendalam terkait permasalahan penelitian. Pemilihan subjek didasarkan pada beberapa pertimbangan. Pertama, mahasiswa yang bekerja di sektor F&B sering kali menghadapi jam kerja yang tidak menentu, tuntutan pelayanan pelanggan, serta tekanan kinerja, sehingga rentan mengalami konflik antara pekerjaan dan studi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa yang bekerja menerapkan strategi manajemen waktu yang cermat untuk menjaga keseimbangan antara studi dan pekerjaan. Dukungan sosial, baik yang berasal dari keluarga, teman, maupun dukungan terhadap diri sendiri, terbukti berperan penting dalam mengurangi stres dan meningkatkan kesejahteraan mereka. Meskipun tantangan seperti kesulitan mengatur waktu dan beban tugas akademik yang berat masih dihadapi, dukungan emosional dan praktis dari lingkungan sekitar sangat membantu mereka dalam mencapai keseimbangan tersebut. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan tentang pentingnya dukungan sosial dalam mengelola work-life balance pada mahasiswa yang bekerja, serta kontribusinya terhadap kesejahteraan dan keberhasilan akademik mereka.*

**Kata kunci:** Mahasiswa yang bekerja, dukungan sosial, work-life balance, manajemen waktu

**A. INTRODUCTION**

Education is a crucial aspect in realizing national progress (Arono & Arsyad, 2019; Irwan et al., 2021). As the main subject of development, human beings must be educated, guided, and developed in order to create high-quality human resources. Education is not limited to non-formal learning pathways but must also be strengthened through formal education, involving students in structured learning processes from the basic to the

higher education level (Darmawan et al., 2023; Munthe & Lase, 2022; Nuryana et al., 2025). Higher education serves as the highest level of formal education that functions as a center for the development of science and technology (Limbong et al., 2024; Papilaya & Huliselan, 2016; Uswati & Mardikantoro, 2023), preparing students to possess academic and professional competence in achieving their degrees (Sinuraya et al., 2022).

In recent years, the phenomenon of university students working while pursuing higher education has become a global trend. This dynamic is driven by the rising cost of education, the need for financial independence, and the desire to gain early work experience (Fauzia et al., 2021; Kartikawati et al., 2023). According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2023), approximately 38% of students in OECD member countries are involved in part-time employment during their studies. A similar trend is evident in Indonesia, where the 2022 National Socio-Economic Survey (Susenas) reported that around 23.4% of Indonesian university students work while studying, either in formal or informal sectors, primarily to support educational and living expenses. More specifically, in urban areas such as Samarinda City, the food and beverage (F&B) sector has become the most preferred employment choice for students, as it offers flexible working hours and abundant opportunities. Data from the Samarinda City Department of Manpower (2023) show that approximately 31% of part-time workers aged 18–25 years are employed in cafés, restaurants, and local culinary businesses. This indicates that an increasing number of students are required to balance their dual roles as learners and workers simultaneously. However, integrating academic and professional responsibilities often creates complex challenges in achieving work-life balance. Working students face dual pressures: on one hand, they must complete academic tasks and maintain satisfactory academic performance; on the other hand, they are expected to demonstrate discipline, time management, and professional commitment in the workplace. According to Law No. 13 of 2003 on Manpower and Law No. 11 of 2020 on Job Creation, the standard working hours in Indonesia are seven hours per day for a six-day work week or eight hours per day for a five-day work week. For students working part-time in the F&B sector under a shift system, these working hours often overlap with class schedules, creating difficulties in maintaining balance. Such imbalance between academic and work demands can lead to reduced productivity, increased stress, and even burnout (Astuti & Nurwidawati, 2023; Burgos, 2017). Within this context, social support plays a vital role in helping students manage the dual demands of study and work. Working students are individuals who pursue higher education while fulfilling their economic needs through part-time employment or self-employment (Lubis et al., 2023). While this experience provides positive outcomes such as practical work experience and additional income, it may also bring negative consequences, including reduced concentration, delayed graduation, and heightened academic stress (Afzil et al., 2024). Students need to manage their time wisely to maintain a balance between learning and working activities. Learning is a process of developing knowledge, values, attitudes, and skills through conscious and planned efforts (Hakim & Hasmira, 2022). A lack of social support can lead to greater difficulty in balancing academic and work demands, which in turn may result in stress, fatigue, and even depression (Lingga et al., 2021). Social support can come from various sources, including family, peers, lecturers, and coworkers, providing emotional, instrumental, or informational assistance that helps individuals adapt and cope with multiple roles (Astuti & Nurwidawati, 2022). Social support is thus considered a mediating factor that influences how individuals perceive and handle stressors in their daily lives.

According to Cohen and Wills (1985), social support can act as both a direct effect on well-being and as a buffer against stressful situations. In the context of working students, such support can enhance resilience, motivation, and academic persistence.

Several previous studies have examined the challenges faced by working students in maintaining work-life balance. For instance, research by Burgos (2017) and Fauzia et al. (2021) highlights that excessive working hours tend to negatively impact academic achievement and student well-being. Similarly, Astuti and Nurwidawati (2023) emphasize that insufficient rest time and overlapping schedules contribute to emotional exhaustion among student workers in service sectors. However, studies focusing on the role of social support as a coping mechanism among working students in Indonesia—particularly in the F&B industry—remain limited. Most research has focused on the quantitative correlation between work intensity and academic performance, leaving the qualitative dimensions of students' lived experiences underexplored. Therefore, this study seeks to fill the gap by exploring how social support helps working students in the F&B sector of Samarinda City to achieve balance between academic and work responsibilities. By employing a qualitative descriptive approach, this study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of how social relationships influence students' ability to manage time, stress, and role conflict. This approach allows for a contextual exploration of students' coping strategies and the meaning they attribute to social interactions in their daily lives.

Through this research, the concept of social education is reflected in how individuals learn and adapt within their social and professional environments. The social interactions that occur between students, peers, educators, and coworkers form a social learning space where values of responsibility, cooperation, and resilience are developed. Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory underpins this process, suggesting that learning occurs through observation, imitation, and modeling within a social context. In this sense, the experience of working students represents an extended form of social education—learning not only occurs in classrooms but also in the workplace and social networks that shape their personal growth and identity. Moreover, the Role Theory (Biddle, 1986) provides another framework to explain the dynamic tension between students' academic and professional identities. According to this theory, individuals occupy multiple social roles with specific expectations and norms. When these roles conflict—such as being a student and an employee—individuals experience role strain or role conflict. Social support, therefore, acts as a moderating factor that can reduce such tension by providing emotional reassurance and practical assistance. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the formulation of more adaptive educational policies and strategies that address the social realities of university students. It also aims to assist educational institutions in designing student development programs that promote well-being and productivity, especially for those balancing their dual roles as learners and workers. From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to expanding the discourse on social education and the integration of social support theory in higher education contexts. Practically, the results can serve as input for universities, policymakers, and employers to create more flexible learning and working arrangements for student workers.

By understanding how social support functions as both a buffer and a motivator in achieving work-life balance, this research seeks to enhance the discourse on social education and contribute to the broader goal of producing well-rounded graduates who are both academically and socially competent. The study, therefore, not only sheds light on the psychological and sociological dimensions of work-life balance but also emphasizes

the importance of fostering collaborative and supportive academic environments in the era of increasingly flexible labor markets.

## **B. RESEARCH METHOD**

This study utilises a qualitative descriptive research design. The qualitative approach focuses on gaining an in-depth understanding of social phenomena or human behaviour (Creswell, 2018). This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze the role of social support in achieving work-life balance among students working in the food and beverage (F&B) industry in Samarinda City. This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of individual experiences and perceptions. The research subjects were selected using a purposive sampling technique, consisting of three active university students working as baristas and kitchen staff in several cafés in Samarinda. They were chosen because they represent students who simultaneously face academic and work responsibilities. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews to obtain primary data regarding the forms, sources, and effects of social support on work-life balance. Secondary data were obtained through documentation and literature review related to student employment and social support. The research instruments included an interview guide and an observation sheet, which ensured the accuracy and relevance of the collected data to the research objectives. In the context of qualitative research, an interview is a communication process involving two or more parties in the form of an exchange of questions and answers between the interviewer and the informant to obtain the required information (Hardani et al., 2020; Sugiyono, 2017). The data analysis in this study was carried out through qualitative descriptive analysis, focusing on interpreting interview results, observations, and relevant documents to identify patterns related to social support and work-life balance. To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, the study applied triangulation of data sources and methods. Triangulation was conducted by combining several data collection techniques, including semi-structured interviews, document studies, and observations. Through this approach, the researcher compared information obtained from different sources to strengthen the credibility of the findings. During the data collection process, the researcher met respondents face-to-face to obtain detailed and contextual information. In addition to primary data, secondary data were gathered from official reports, institutional records, and reliable internet sources related to the topic of student employment and social support in the food and beverage industry. Interviews with informants were conducted at Kedai Kopi Hitam Manis, located at Jl. Ir. H. Juanda No. 25 A, Air Putih, Kec. Kota Samarinda Ulu, Kota Samarinda, and at Kedai Kopi Pian Kota Samarinda, located at Jl. A. M Sangaji No. 138B.

## **C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

This study involved three informants working in the food and beverage industry in Samarinda City. Two of the informants worked as baristas in cafés, while the third

informant worked as kitchen staff. Primary data were obtained through in-depth face-to-face interviews, while secondary data were collected from documents and online sources related to student workers in this sector. Based on the interviews, the first informant chose to work as a barista to deepen their knowledge of coffee. The informant stated: "I'm interested in being a barista because I want to learn more about different types of coffee and brewing techniques. Besides, the income from this job really helps me cover my college expenses." The second informant initially worked as a barista by coincidence but gradually developed a strong interest in the coffee-making process. They explained: "At first, I worked in a café by chance, but over time, I got used to the environment and became interested in the coffee-making process. Eventually, I wanted to explore the coffee world more deeply." Meanwhile, the third informant, who worked as kitchen staff, stated that the main reason for choosing this job was the flexible working hours and proximity to campus, allowing them to continue their studies while working. Triangulation of data from interviews, observations, and document analysis revealed that the main factors driving students to work in the food and beverage sector are financial motivation, interest in the culinary field, and flexible working hours. In addition, social support from coworkers, supervisors, and family members plays an essential role in helping them maintain a balance between work and study. The third informant also mentioned that working in the kitchen provides valuable hands-on experience, improves teamwork skills, and helps them meet daily financial needs. The experience of managing time and working collaboratively in the kitchen was considered highly beneficial for personal development.



*Source: Researcher Documentation*

**Figure 1.** Documentation of Researchers with Informants

In fulfilling both academic and work demands, the informants divided their time by applying time management strategies that prioritize academic activities. All class schedules and academic tasks were planned in advance, followed by the creation of work schedules adjusted to their available free time. Academic responsibilities were always prioritized to ensure assignments were completed and exam preparations ran optimally. The remaining time was then allocated for work while maintaining a balance that did not interfere with academic performance. According to the second informant, effective time management between study and work requires careful planning to ensure that both academic and professional needs are met while allowing adequate rest. This can be achieved by

structuring daily routines, setting clear priorities between study and work, and limiting unproductive activities. The use of digital planners or diaries helps in monitoring and managing time efficiently. Maintaining a regular sleep schedule and setting aside time for relaxation were also identified as important factors in maintaining optimal physical and mental health. The third informant emphasized that effective time management for working students requires structured planning, task prioritization, and self-discipline through detailed daily schedules. Regarding the challenges of studying while working, all three informants provided similar answers—difficulty managing time. They explained that such difficulties often arise due to overlapping class and work schedules, heavy academic workloads, and job responsibilities that demand significant time and energy. A lack of effective time management skills may cause delays and difficulties in prioritizing tasks, while external factors such as long commutes and personal responsibilities exacerbate the problem (Lusi, 2021; Matindas et al., 2023). Concerning the positive and negative impacts of working while studying, the first and second informants stated that working helped them develop good time management skills—an essential ability for achieving productivity and life balance. The third informant added that working allowed them to make more friends and build a wide social network, which provides access to diverse perspectives, social support, and collaboration opportunities (Meiji, 2019). However, all informants agreed that the most prominent negative impact was the feeling of being overwhelmed by the dual demands of work and study. When asked about the support needed to achieve work-life balance, all three informants emphasized the importance of receiving support from those around them—friends, family, and loved ones. Moreover, self-motivation was also identified as a key strength that helps them remain committed to fulfilling their responsibilities. The ability to motivate, calm, and guide oneself was seen as crucial for overcoming challenges and achieving well-being. Individuals with strong self-support tend to be more resilient, better at coping with stress, and more successful in achieving their goals (Hardani, 2024; Rahadiansyah & Chusairi, 2021). Family and peer support were also found to play vital roles in the success of working students (Sabila & Rahayu, 2025).

**Tabel 1.** Research Findings Summary

| Aspect of Findings       | Brief Description  | Primary Data Evidence                          |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Reason for working       | Financial needs, interest in coffee/culinary field, flexible working hours | Interview excerpts from Informants 1, 2, and 3 |
| Source of social support | Coworkers, supervisors, and family   | Interviews and workplace observations          |
| Positive impact          | Improved time management, responsibility, and teamwork skills              | Statement from Informant 3                     |
| Challenges               | Overlapping work and class schedules                                       | Field observation notes                        |

## Discussion

The findings of this study can be interpreted through the lens of Role Theory, which emphasizes how individuals perform and balance multiple social roles simultaneously (Biddle, 1986). In the case of working students in the food and beverage industry, they play dual roles—as students and employees—each with its own set of expectations, responsibilities, and pressures. Role conflict arises when the demands of one role interfere with the performance of another, a situation commonly experienced by students who must manage both academic deadlines and work schedules. Within this context, social support from family, peers, and self-encouragement functions as a moderating factor that reduces role conflict and facilitates better adaptation to overlapping demands. From a social education perspective, the support provided by family and peers contributes to the development of students' social and emotional competencies beyond formal education. Families provide emotional stability and practical assistance, while peers serve as networks for collaboration and shared learning. These interactions align with the concept of informal social education, in which learning and character formation occur through everyday social experiences outside the classroom (Ismail et al., 2023; Santo & Alfian, 2021). Therefore, the role of family and peers not only assists students in managing dual responsibilities but also enhances their social resilience and self-regulation skills. Furthermore, the findings of this study are consistent with Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), which posits that individuals acquire behaviors, values, and coping mechanisms through observation, imitation, and reinforcement within their social environments. Working students learn effective strategies for balancing study and work by observing and interacting with supportive figures—such as coworkers, mentors, or family members. This social learning process enables them to develop adaptive behaviors, manage stress, and maintain a positive attitude toward both academic and professional challenges. In this context, self-support can be viewed as an extension of internalized social learning, in which students develop self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation through reflection and feedback from their social environment (Sugardhana & Budiani, 2023). Students with strong self-support demonstrate higher autonomy, emotional control, and persistence in achieving their goals despite external pressures. Hence, the integration of Role Theory and Social Learning Theory provides a comprehensive understanding of how social support functions as both an external and internal resource in achieving work-life balance. It highlights that the success of working students is not solely determined by academic or institutional factors, but also by the quality of their social relationships and the strength of personal coping mechanisms developed through daily social interactions.

## D. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight the significant role of social support in helping working students achieve balance between their academic and professional responsibilities. Maintaining work-life balance remains a multidimensional challenge that requires comprehensive solutions involving not only individual efforts but also the participation of families, educational institutions, workplaces, and policymakers. Therefore, creating a sustainable and supportive environment for working students must be viewed as a

collective responsibility that combines personal strategies with systemic support mechanisms. At the individual level, working students must strengthen their ability to regulate themselves effectively. Self-regulation involves awareness, planning, and control of one's own behavior to achieve desired goals. Students should develop the ability to set realistic priorities, create structured study and work schedules, and manage time efficiently. Training programs related to time management, stress management, and self-discipline can be extremely beneficial. These programs may be delivered through workshops, seminars, or online courses designed by universities to help students develop practical strategies for managing their dual roles. In addition, emotional resilience plays a critical role in maintaining psychological stability when students face overlapping responsibilities. By engaging in reflective activities such as journaling or mindfulness practices, students can strengthen their coping abilities, recognize signs of burnout early, and seek appropriate support when necessary. Family also holds an essential position as a provider of both emotional and instrumental support. Emotional support from parents or siblings, expressed through empathy, understanding, and encouragement, helps students maintain motivation and confidence in navigating their dual roles. Instrumental support, including financial assistance, advice, or a more flexible division of household responsibilities, can significantly ease the daily pressures faced by working students. In many Indonesian families, academic success is often emphasized, which sometimes leads to misunderstanding regarding students' decision to work. Therefore, it is important to increase family awareness that part-time employment is not merely an economic necessity but also a valuable opportunity for experiential learning, personal growth, and the development of responsibility. Through regular communication and a shared understanding between students and their families, a more supportive environment can be built, enabling students to perform well both academically and professionally. Universities play a strategic role in shaping an academic environment that supports work-life balance for students. As centers for intellectual and character development, universities must provide flexible academic structures that accommodate students who work. This can be realized through the implementation of hybrid learning systems, evening or weekend classes, and asynchronous learning platforms. Such flexibility allows students to attend classes and complete assignments without sacrificing their work obligations. Furthermore, universities need to strengthen their counseling and mentoring services. Academic advisors should be trained to understand the specific challenges faced by working students so they can provide tailored guidance related to time management, stress reduction, and academic planning. Creating peer support communities can also help working students share experiences and strategies for balancing work and study, reducing feelings of isolation, and fostering a sense of belonging. Beyond academic adjustments, universities should recognize that part-time work experiences can serve as valuable components of the learning process. By integrating workplace experience into the curriculum through internship credits, reflective essays, or applied projects, institutions can bridge the gap between education and employment. This approach not only validates students' work experiences but also promotes the concept of learning as a lifelong, holistic process. In addition, the inclusion of seminars and training on mental health, personal well-being, and financial literacy as part

of student development programs can help prepare students to face the complex realities of working life. Workplaces, particularly in the food and beverage sector where most student workers are employed, also have a vital role in supporting the well-being and productivity of student employees. Employers should adopt flexible scheduling policies that take into account academic calendars and examination periods. Shift arrangements should be discussed openly to prevent conflicts between academic responsibilities and work schedules. Beyond flexibility, workplaces can contribute to students' personal and professional growth by offering mentoring programs that connect them with more experienced workers or supervisors. Through such mentoring, students can receive guidance on both technical skills and soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and customer service, which are essential for their future careers. Employers should foster a culture of empathy and respect toward student workers by acknowledging their dual responsibilities and providing an inclusive environment that promotes learning and well-being. Companies that invest in the welfare of student workers will not only enhance employee satisfaction but also benefit from higher retention and productivity rates. At the policy level, collaboration between government agencies, universities, and the private sector is crucial. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Manpower should jointly formulate regulations that recognize the unique needs of student workers. National guidelines should ensure that part-time employment opportunities for students align with educational goals and do not hinder academic performance. Policies promoting fair working hours, proper compensation, and protection against exploitation must be enforced. Government support can also be directed toward the creation of partnerships between higher education institutions and industries to provide structured, education-oriented part-time work programs. These initiatives would contribute to Indonesia's long-term goal of producing highly skilled, adaptable, and socially responsible human resources. Future research is encouraged to expand on the insights generated from this study. Given the limited number of informants, subsequent studies should involve larger and more diverse samples across different regions and industries to ensure greater generalizability. Combining qualitative and quantitative methods would provide a richer and more balanced understanding of how social support influences the work-life balance of students. Longitudinal research could also explore how students' coping mechanisms evolve over time as they transition from university life to full-time employment. Moreover, examining variables such as gender, socioeconomic status, and cultural expectations could help identify the different ways social support functions among various groups of students. In essence, achieving work-life balance among working students is not merely an individual endeavor but a shared social and institutional responsibility. Social support, both emotional and instrumental, serves as a bridge that enables students to integrate their academic and professional lives in a harmonious and sustainable way. Universities, families, and workplaces must work collaboratively to build an ecosystem that nurtures student well-being while fostering productivity and personal growth. Strengthening self-regulation and time management skills, enhancing institutional flexibility, and promoting policies that recognize the dual roles of student workers are essential components of this effort. Ultimately, supporting working students is an investment in the quality of human capital.

that will shape the nation's future. When educational institutions and workplaces provide genuine support, students are not only able to succeed academically but also develop resilience, adaptability, and a strong sense of responsibility—qualities that are indispensable in today's competitive and dynamic world. The synergy between social support, self-discipline, and an adaptive educational environment becomes the foundation for achieving true work-life balance and fostering graduates who are academically competent, emotionally stable, and socially empowered.

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