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Relationship between Work-Study Conflict and Academic Stress among Internship Students

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ABSTRACT

Currently, As the number of students balancing internships with academic responsibilities increases, the simultaneous demands of these roles often lead to heightened stress levels. This overlap frequently results in Work-Study Conflict (WSC), where the challenges of managing both work and study contribute to significant stress. This study explores the prevalence of WSC and its impact on academic stress among students. Participants included 170 students (both male and female), aged 18-23 years, who were enrolled at University X and engaged in internships requiring about 40 hours per week. The Work-School Conflict Scale was used to measure WSC, and the Perceptions of Academic Stress Scale assessed academic stress. Utilizing a non-experimental correlational design with quantitative methods, Pearson's correlation analysis was applied to test the hypothesis. The results indicated a significant positive relationship between WSC and academic stress, with an r(170) = 0.545 and p = 0.000, demonstrating a notable correlation between the variables.

Keywords: Work-study conflict, academic stress, internship students, student stress, work-school balance.

1. INTRODUCTION

An increasing number of students are now balancing college studies with internships at various organizations or institutions. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture and Research and Technology in Indonesia, approximately 13,272 students participated in Internship and Independent Study programs facilitated by the government in 2021 (Directorate General of Higher Education, 2021). Managing both academic and work responsibilities concurrently often poses significant challenges for students in effectively allocating their time between these activities. Previous research by Wan et al. (2021) highlighted that the primary issue leading to Work-Study Conflict is the time pressure arising from juggling both roles, which makes it difficult for students to adapt to their dual responsibilities. Similarly, a study conducted by Mardelina and Muhson (2017) in Indonesia found that students engaged in both work and study frequently struggle with time management, resulting in diminished focus and performance in both areas.

These things will later lead to work-school conflict or work-study conflict (WSC) because WSC happens when resources that are meant for academic use are used for work (Olson, 2014). WSC was originally referred to as work-school conflict which is defined as a conflict that arises when job time or work activities interfere with school-related activities (Markel & Frone, 1998). The term WSC by Markel and Frone (1998) was first used to describe students who also do work, and are usually working as part-time employees. However, this term was later expanded by Thamrin et al. (2019), who enlarged the term work-study conflict at the college student level. In light of this, it is necessary to further investigate the phenomena that occur in students. According to research conducted by the American College Health Association (2018), of the 88,178 college students who filled out a survey during the last 12 months, reported higher than average levels

of stress, and 12.7% reported extremely high levels of stress related to academic pursuits. 76.7% of the research participants in a different study by Herawati and Gayatri (2019) reported experiencing moderate to severe stress, and 82% of those students had extracurricular activities including work and organization outside of class.

Based on the definition of experts, according to Selye (1976) stress is the body's reaction to an unpredictable pressure in each individual. Meanwhile, another definition states that stress is an individual reaction to events that are thought to be disruptive to their well-being, these circumstances can be either negative or positive (King, 2017). According to Wilks (2008), academic stress is a significant pressure that students experience due to academic demands that surpass personal adaptive capacities. Therefore, academic stress can be defined as a state of stress experienced by an individual as a result of academic issues. Academic stress is a common issue among students, and its root causes include issues with time management, money, and social contact (Varghese et al, 2015).

The academic stress experienced by these college students needs to be addressed because it has numerous negative effects and shouldn't be left unnoticed. High levels of stress can have a negative impact on the physical and emotional well-being of the individual experiencing it, those stress can have an adverse effect on the immune system which can impair the hippocampus (Yaribeygi et al., 2017). This effect is further supported by studies looking at how academic stress impacts students' immune systems, making them more susceptible to illness including emotional weariness, depressive symptoms, and depersonalization (Maydych et al., 2017). Among students, academic stress has a pretty bad impact. If previously mentioned long-term effects on chronic stress, in students themselves mild stress is associated with negative health behaviors such as consuming high-fat foods, reduced physical activity, increased consumption of cigarettes and alcohol (Enns et al., 2018).

One of the studies conducted by Kremer (2016) examined several variables and associated them to stress, such as work-family conflict, work-school conflict, and family-school conflict. In this study, one that was tested was WSC which was associated with stress in the participants, and this research demonstrated a positive correlation between WSC and stress. WSC has also been studied on the relationship between working students' physical and mental wellbeing. Research shows that there is a negative correlation between psychological health and WSC (Park & Sprung, 2013). This indicates that the higher the level of WSC or the greater the conflict in work and school activities, the lower the psychological health of a student who is working. However, despite the fact that the psychological wellness mentioned in this study also includes not being under pressure or feeling stress, Park and Sprung's (2013) research did not specifically address stress, particularly academic stress on working students. The researchers concluded from these earlier studies that there had been no research specifically looking for a correlation between WSC and academic stress among internship students. Therefore, researchers are interested in determining whether the internship activities that are conducted concurrently with lecture that creates conflict (WSC) has a correlation with academic stress.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

WSC originally stood for work-school conflict defined as conflict that occurs when work time clashes with school activities or when work activities put pressure on academic-related activities (Markel & Frone, 1998). Then the term was expanded into work-study conflict by Thamrin et al. (2019), because his research proved that apart from school students, WSC can also occur in college students who are studying while doing work. In addition, WSC is also defined as conflict when work gets in the way of activities related to school, and its nature leads from work to school (Laughman et al., 2016).

Olson (2014) explains that role conflict that occurs in working college students has two main aspects, namely based on tension and time. The first is based on tension (strain-based), which refers to work-related physical and mental demands that may prevent full involvement in each of these two roles, especially in tasks involving academic activity. These strain-based characteristics are typically brought on by pressures related to employment and the workplace (Buonocore & Russo, 2013). In this context, tension refers to sapped vitality and a sense of emotional pressure (Olson, 2014). The amount of time spent working, which ultimately requires time to complete obligations in academic work, is the second factor, which is based on the aspect of time (time-based). This is associated to the number of hours worked as well as the rigid work schedule (Buonocore & Russo, 2013).

Experts have offered various definitions of stress. Selye (1976) defines stress as the body's response to unpredictable pressures experienced by an individual. In contrast, another definition suggests that stress represents an individual's reaction to events perceived as disruptive to their well-being, which can be either negative or positive (King, 2017). Lazarus et al. (1985) conceptualize stress as a multifaceted construct involving emotions, cognition, and motivation, shaped by interactions with the environment. According to Wilks (2008), academic stress is a significant pressure experienced by students when academic demands exceed their personal adaptive capacities. Bedewy and Gabriel (2015) describe academic stress as a state of distress related to time constraints, lecture loads, self-perception, and academic demands. Thus, academic stress can be understood as a condition of stress resulting from academic challenges.

The Perceptions of Academic Stress Scale, developed by Bedewy and Gabriel (2015), identifies four dimensions of academic stress: pressures to perform, perceptions of workload and examinations, self-perceptions, and time constraints. Pressures to perform involve stress from external expectations, such as those from classmates, parents, and lecturers. Perceptions of workload and examinations refer to the stress associated with excessive coursework and fears of failing exams. Self-perceptions pertain to students' confidence in their academic abilities and their belief in their capacity to succeed. The dimension of time constraints reflects the pressure caused by insufficient time for coursework, assignments, and leisure activities.

High levels of stress can have a negative impact on the physical and emotional well-being of the individual. Chronic stress can have an adverse effect on the immune system. Chronic stress can impair the hippocampus, which is linked to memory, causing cognitive issues that can lead to depression (Yaribeygi et al., 2017). This effect is further supported by studies looking at how academic stress impacts students' immune systems, making them more susceptible to illness including emotional weariness, depressive symptoms, and depersonalization (Maydych et al., 2017). Among students, academic stress has a pretty bad impact. If previously mentioned long-term effects on chronic stress, in students themselves mild stress is associated with negative health behaviors such as consuming high-fat foods, reduced physical activity, increased consumption of cigarettes and alcohol (Enns et al., 2018). Emotionally stress can affect productivity levels, problems in relationships, and even decreased performance in academics (Costa & Pinto, 2017). According to research from the University of Indonesia, students experience the negative effects of stress most often on their physical health, manifesting as fatigue, headaches, eating problems, and other symptoms (Musabiq & Karimah, 2018).

According to research from the University of Indonesia, students experience the negative effects of stress most often on their physical health, displaying fatigue, headaches, eating problems, and other symptoms (Musabiq & Karimah, 2018). The study also demonstrates how stress affects health, with 32% of respondents reporting a negative impact on physical health and 27% reporting a negative impact on emotional aspects. This is because kids who endure academic stress are typically 95% more likely to experience depression (Jayanthi et al., 2015). Moreover, it has been proven that student academic stress is significantly correlated with depression and even increases the likelihood of considering suicide (Ang & Huan, 2006).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted at a university in Jakarta and involved a total of 170 students, comprising 55 men (32.3%) and 115 women (67.6%) who were concurrently engaged in internships. Participants were drawn from various faculties, including Psychology (27.65%), Economics and Business (27.65%), Informatics Engineering (14.12%), Communication Sciences (10%), Engineering (8.82%), Law (5.88%), and Arts and Design (5.88%).

The research employed a quantitative, non-experimental design. A non-probability sampling method, specifically convenience sampling, was used to select participants. Data collection was conducted online via Google Forms, which included a questionnaire and informed consent. Data analysis was performed using SPSS Version 25, utilizing quantitative methods to assess the correlation between the study's variables.

The Work-School Conflict Scale, developed by Markel and Frone (1998), was used to measure Work-Study Conflict (WSC). This scale includes five positively framed items rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Academic stress was assessed using the Perceptions of Academic Stress Scale developed by Bedewy and Gabriel (2015), which consists of 18 items, including five negatively framed items, and is also rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

4. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

To assess the distribution of the data, a normality test was conducted, which is essential for selecting the appropriate correlation analysis technique. The normality test was performed using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. This test evaluates whether the sample data follows a normal distribution, which is crucial for applying parametric statistical methods. The results of the normality test indicated that the data for both key variables in the study—Work-Study Conflict (WSC) and academic stress—are normally distributed.

For the WSC variable, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test yielded a p-value of 0.070, which is greater than the significance level of 0.05. This result suggests that the distribution of the WSC data does not significantly deviate from normality, supporting the use of parametric tests for further analysis. Similarly, the normality test for the academic stress variable resulted in a p-value of 0.200, also exceeding the 0.05 threshold. This finding indicates that the academic stress data is normally distributed as well. Thus, both sets of data meet the assumptions required for parametric analysis, affirming the appropriateness of using correlation analysis to explore the relationships between Work-Study Conflict and academic stress in this study.

Table 1 Normality Test

Variable	p
WSC	0.070
Academic Stress	0.200

Following the normality test, which confirmed that the data for both Work-Study Conflict (WSC) and academic stress were normally distributed, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between these two variables. The Pearson correlation coefficient is used to measure the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two continuous variables. The analysis revealed a significant correlation between WSC and academic stress.

Specifically, the correlation coefficient, r(170) = 0.545r(170) = 0.545r(170) = 0.545, indicates a moderate to strong positive relationship between the two variables. This result means that higher levels of Work-Study Conflict are associated with higher levels of academic stress among students.

The statistical significance of this relationship is supported by the p-value obtained from the analysis, which was p=0.000p = 0.000p=0.000. This p-value is less than the conventional alpha level of 0.05, confirming that the observed correlation is statistically significant. Therefore, the data suggest that as students experience greater conflict between their work and study responsibilities, their levels of academic stress increase correspondingly. This finding underscores the impact of Work-Study Conflict on academic stress and highlights the importance of addressing these challenges to improve student well-being.

Table 2 Correlation Test Variables

WSC and Academic Stress	**r**	**p**
	0.545	<0.001

In addition to the overall correlation analysis between Work-Study Conflict (WSC) and academic stress, a detailed examination of the dimensions of these variables was conducted as seen in Table 3. For WSC, the dimensions assessed were strain-based conflict and time-based conflict. Academic stress was evaluated across four dimensions: pressures to perform, perceptions of workload and examinations, self-perceptions, and time restraints. The correlational analysis revealed that all dimensions of WSC and academic stress were significantly correlated with each other. Specifically:

i. Strain-Based WSC: This dimension reflects the strain or stress experienced due to the demands and pressures of balancing work and study responsibilities. It was found to be significantly correlated with several dimensions of academic stress, including pressures to perform and perceptions of workload and examinations.
ii. Time-Based WSC: This dimension pertains to the conflicts arising from the allocation of time between work and academic activities. It also showed significant correlations with academic stress dimensions, particularly with time restraints and pressures to perform.

For academic stress, the dimensions were found to have significant correlations with both strain-based and time-based WSC. This includes:

i. Pressures to Perform: Strongly correlated with both dimensions of WSC, indicating that higher work-study conflict is associated with increased pressure from external expectations.
ii. Perceptions of Workload and Examinations: Significantly correlated with strain-based conflict, suggesting that difficulties in managing work and study responsibilities contribute to perceptions of excessive workload and examination pressure.
iii. Self-Perceptions: This dimension, which involves students' confidence in their academic abilities, was positively correlated with both strain-based and time-based WSC.
iv. Time Restraints: A strong correlation was observed with time-based conflict, reflecting that conflicts in time management between work and study contribute to feelings of inadequacy and time pressure.

These findings emphasize the multifaceted nature of the relationship between Work-Study Conflict and academic stress. They highlight how different aspects of both work-study conflict and academic stress are interrelated, reinforcing the need for targeted interventions to manage these stresses effectively.

Table 3 Correlation Test Dimensions

Variable or dimensions	Coefficient Correlation	p	Result
Strain-based — academic stress	.462	<0.001	Significant
Time-based — academic stress	.505	<0.001	Significant
Pressures to perform — WSC	.393	<0.001	Significant
Perceptions of workload and examinations — WSC	.417	<0.001	Significant
Self-perceptions — WSC	.364	<0.001	Significant
Time restraints — WSC	.504	<0.001	Significant

5. DISCUSSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

College students engaged in internships often work approximately 40 hours per week, which equates to around 8 hours a day. Balancing this with academic responsibilities can lead to significant challenges. Many students find themselves needing to reallocate time traditionally reserved for leisure to complete academic tasks. This juggling act not only impacts their time management but can also lead to physical and psychological exhaustion. Such exhaustion can diminish motivation and engagement with academic work, a phenomenon observed in previous research by Thamrin et al. (2019), which found that work-study conflict (WSC) notably disrupts students' academic activities by causing fatigue and overlap of work hours.

The correlation analysis in this study reveals a significant and moderate positive relationship between WSC and academic stress. This finding supports the hypothesis that as WSC increases, so does academic stress. Conversely, lower levels of WSC are associated with reduced academic stress. This result aligns with Kremer's (2016) findings that WSC has a significant positive relationship with general stress. The study confirms that students managing internships alongside academic responsibilities experience heightened academic stress due to work-study conflict.

Further analysis supports Park and Sprung's (2013) conclusion that WSC negatively impacts psychological health. As WSC increases, perceived pressure and strain also rise, manifesting as academic stress for students whose primary role remains as learners.

However, this study has several limitations. Data collection via self-reported Google Forms may introduce biases, as participants might report socially desirable responses rather than their true experiences. Additionally, the study's limited scope, confined to a single university in Jakarta, may not fully represent the broader population of internship students in Jakarta or Indonesia. The study also did not account for other potential variables that could influence the relationship between WSC and academic stress.

Future research should aim to address these limitations by employing a broader, more representative sample and exploring additional variables that could impact the relationship between WSC and academic stress. Investigating the effects of WSC on academic stress using regression analysis could provide deeper insights into these dynamics. Additionally, future studies could examine whether WSC is a component of academic stress or if the two variables are distinct but interconnected.

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