

Peer support as a protective factor against academic stress among working students completing their theses

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: to examine the relationship between peer social support and academic stress among working parallel-class students at Universitas Esa Unggul who were completing their undergraduate theses.

Method: this study employed a quantitative, non-experimental design involving 157 working parallel-class students at Universitas Esa Unggul who were completing their undergraduate theses. Participants were selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected using the Student-Life Stress Inventory (SSI) and a peer social support scale and analyzed using simple linear regression.

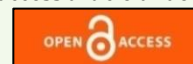
Findings: peer social support significantly and negatively predicted academic stress among working students completing their undergraduate theses. Peer social support accounted for 8.4% of the variance in academic stress, indicating that higher peer social support was associated with lower academic stress.

Implications: peer social support is an interpersonal resource for managing academic stress among working students completing their undergraduate theses and suggests the need for universities to strengthen peer-based academic and emotional support systems.

Originality: lies in its focus on the role of peer social support in academic stress among working parallel-class students completing their undergraduate theses, a population that has received limited attention in previous research, particularly at Universitas Esa Unggul.



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Introduction

Higher education represents an important stage of formal education in which students are expected not only to acquire academic knowledge but also to develop the competencies and independence necessary for their future careers and personal development (Bhardwaj et al., 2025; Marginson, 2024). Students must meet various academic demands, including attending lectures, completing assignments, meeting

academic standards, and completing their studies within the prescribed period (Muslimah et al., 2020; Prastiwi & Imanti, 2022). Ideally, students can devote sufficient time and attention to their academic responsibilities (Li et al., 2024). However, not all students can focus exclusively on their studies because some must also fulfill other responsibilities, particularly employment (Goulart et al., 2022). Students who work while pursuing higher education therefore face a dual-role situation that requires them to manage academic and occupational demands simultaneously (Hasanah & Yanuar, 2023; Purba & Awaru, 2025).

Working students are individuals who simultaneously hold the roles of student and employee. This combination requires them to divide their time, energy, attention, and other personal resources between academic and occupational responsibilities (Febrianti et al., 2020). In addition to managing competing schedules, working students may face heavy workloads, monotonous routines, workplace interpersonal problems, and physical fatigue, all of which can interfere with their academic functioning (Subandy & Jatmika, 2020). These challenges may become increasingly demanding when students enter the final stage of their studies and are required to complete their undergraduate thesis. An undergraduate thesis is a scientific academic work that students are generally required to complete to obtain a bachelor's degree (Syam & Gismin, 2025). The thesis process requires sustained concentration, independent work, effective time management, and ongoing engagement with academic supervisors, making it particularly demanding for students who must also fulfill occupational responsibilities (Nurcahyani & Prastuti, 2020).

The thesis-writing stage often comes with various academic difficulties. Students may struggle to find relevant references, understand international journals and books, determine appropriate research methods, process research data, and respond to feedback during supervision (Kurniawati & Setyaningsih, 2022). For working students, these academic challenges are compounded by occupational demands, physical exhaustion, limited time, and reduced concentration. The simultaneous accumulation of academic and work responsibilities can increase workload and make it difficult to allocate sufficient resources to each role (Pusparini et al., 2025; Rahman & Qodariah, 2025). Consequently, students may struggle to maintain consistent progress in thesis completion and may become vulnerable to psychological pressure.

One psychological consequence that may emerge from these conditions is academic stress. Academic stress occurs when academic demands are perceived as exceeding an individual's capacity to cope with them (Blindheim et al., 2025; Micheluzzi et al., 2025). Gadzella (1994) conceptualize academic stress through two major components: academic stressors and reactions to stressors. Academic stressors include frustration, conflict, pressure, changes, and self-imposed demands, while reactions to these stressors may manifest as physical, emotional, and behavioral responses. For working students completing their theses, academic stress may arise from increasingly complex academic demands, difficulty balancing work and thesis completion, and pressure to graduate within the expected time frame (Pusparini et al., 2025). Persistent academic stress may subsequently be reflected in fatigue, anxiety, decreased motivation, procrastination, avoidance of academic supervision, and delays in completing academic requirements (Maharani et al., 2024).

Empirical findings support the existence of academic stress among working students. Christien (2023), in a study of working students at Universitas Esa Unggul, found that 56% of 100 respondents experienced high academic stress, with a mean score of 61.51. Similarly, Damayanti (2022) found that 69 out of 136 final-year students

(50.7%) experienced stress while completing their undergraduate theses. These findings indicate that academic stress is not merely a theoretical concern but a substantial psychological issue among university students, particularly those in the final stage of their studies. For students who work while completing their theses, the combination of academic and occupational demands may create a particularly vulnerable condition in which psychological resources are continuously challenged.

Academic stress, however, is not determined solely by the demands students experience. Previous literature suggests that both internal and external factors influence stress. Internal factors include beliefs about one's abilities, psychological resilience, achievement motivation, and tendencies toward procrastination, whereas external factors include environmental resources, particularly social support (Yusuf & Yusuf, 2020). Social support refers to interpersonal relationships through which individuals receive assistance, either directly or indirectly, when dealing with difficulties or demands (Sestiani & Muhid, 2021). Among university students, peer social support is particularly relevant because peers often experience similar academic demands and developmental challenges. Peer support can take several forms, including emotional support, esteem or appraisal support, instrumental assistance, informational support, and social-network support (Choi et al., 2024; Lestari & Purnamasari, 2022).

The importance of peer social support can also be understood from the developmental characteristics of university students. According to Scott et al. (2022), individuals in emerging adulthood, including university students, tend to establish close relationships with peers and spend considerable time with them. Consequently, peers can become an important source of emotional and practical assistance when individuals encounter problems that are difficult to manage independently (Gunawan & Huwae, 2022; Joo et al., 2022). For students completing an undergraduate thesis, peers may provide opportunities to exchange information, discuss academic difficulties, share experiences with thesis supervision, offer encouragement, and provide emotional reassurance (Jacobsen et al., 2025). Such support may help students perceive academic demands as more manageable and maintain their motivation to continue working toward thesis completion (Primadhani, 2022).

Several empirical studies provide evidence regarding the relationship between peer social support and psychological or academic difficulties among university students. Misalia et al. (2022) found a relationship between peer social support and anxiety among final-year students completing their undergraduate theses. Hartati et al. (2022) also reported a relationship between peer social support and academic procrastination, suggesting that stronger peer support may be associated with more adaptive academic behavior. More directly, Kotyśko & Frankowiak (2025) found that peer social support influenced academic stress among working university students, with higher levels of social support associated with lower levels of academic stress. Similarly, Lestari & Purnamasari (2022) reported that greater peer social support was associated with lower academic stress among university students. These findings suggest that peer social support may function as a protective factor that helps students cope with academic demands and reduces their vulnerability to psychological stress.

The protective role of peer social support can be further explained through the stress-and-coping perspective. When students encounter demanding situations, the psychological impact of those demands may depend not only on the intensity of the stressors but also on the resources available to cope with them. Social support can provide emotional reassurance, practical assistance, relevant information, and positive feedback, thereby helping individuals manage stressful situations more effectively. In

the context of working students completing their theses, peer support may therefore reduce the perceived discrepancy between academic demands and available coping resources. Students who receive adequate peer support may feel less isolated in dealing with thesis-related difficulties, gain practical strategies from peers facing similar challenges, and maintain greater confidence and motivation throughout the thesis process. Thus, peer social support is theoretically expected to be associated with lower levels of academic stress.

Despite growing evidence on social support and academic stress, several limitations remain in the literature. Previous studies have generally examined final-year students, working students, or students completing undergraduate theses as separate populations. Although Samaratunga et al. (2025) examined working students, the broader literature has not sufficiently focused on students who simultaneously experience employment, final-year academic demands, and undergraduate thesis completion. Furthermore, research examining this relationship specifically among parallel-class students at Universitas Esa Unggul remains limited. This population matters because parallel-class programs often accommodate students who combine higher education with employment or other substantial responsibilities. Therefore, the simultaneous demands associated with employment and thesis completion may create a distinctive academic context that cannot necessarily be generalized from studies of conventional full-time students.

This study addresses this gap by examining the role of peer social support in relation to academic stress among parallel-class students completing their undergraduate theses at Universitas Esa Unggul. This study's novelty lies in integrating three conditions within a single research context: students' status as working students, their position as final-year thesis writers, and their participation in a parallel-class program. Rather than examining peer support merely as a general social resource, this study positions peer social support as a potential protective factor against academic stress within a population experiencing simultaneous academic and occupational demands. This focus is expected to provide a more context-specific understanding of how interpersonal resources may help students manage the psychological demands associated with completing a thesis while working.

Accordingly, the primary objective of this study is to examine the relationship between peer social support and academic stress among parallel-class students who are completing their undergraduate theses at Universitas Esa Unggul. Specifically, this study seeks to determine whether higher levels of peer social support are associated with lower levels of academic stress. The findings are expected to contribute both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study may strengthen the literature concerning social support and academic stress by providing empirical evidence from a specific population facing simultaneous academic and occupational demands. Practically, the findings may provide useful information for universities, academic supervisors, student support services, and peer-based programs in developing strategies to help working students manage thesis-related demands and reduce academic stress. Understanding the protective role of peer support may also encourage the development of supportive peer environments in which students can exchange academic information, provide emotional encouragement, and assist one another throughout the thesis-completion process. Based on the theoretical arguments and empirical findings discussed above, peer social support is expected to have a protective relationship with academic stress. Higher levels of peer social support are expected to be associated with lower levels of academic stress among parallel-class students

completing their undergraduate theses. Therefore, the hypothesis proposed in this study is: H1: Peer social support has a significant negative effect on academic stress among parallel-class students who are completing their undergraduate theses at Universitas Esa Unggul.

Method

This study employed a quantitative, non-experimental research design using simple linear regression analysis. The quantitative approach was selected because the study aimed to test the proposed hypothesis by analyzing numerical data from standardized psychological measurement instruments. The non-experimental design was used because the researchers did not manipulate or administer any specific treatment to the participants. Instead, the study examined the statistical relationship between peer social support (the predictor variable) and academic stress (the outcome variable). Simple linear regression was subsequently employed to determine whether peer social support significantly predicts academic stress among parallel-class students at Universitas Esa Unggul who were completing their undergraduate theses.

The population consisted of all active parallel-class students at Universitas Esa Unggul who were completing their undergraduate theses. Based on the available population data, the total population comprised 1,226 students. The minimum sample size was determined using an a priori power analysis through G*Power, which indicated that a minimum of 89 participants was required to achieve adequate statistical power for the analysis. Participants were recruited using a non-probability sampling method with a purposive sampling technique. This technique was selected because participants were required to meet specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives. The inclusion criterion was that participants had to be active parallel-class students at Universitas Esa Unggul who were currently enrolled in the undergraduate thesis course. Participants who did not meet this criterion were excluded from the study. Consequently, a total of 157 respondents were obtained.

Primary data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed to eligible participants. Before completing the questionnaire, participants received information about the study's purpose and the nature of their participation. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The questionnaire consisted of measures of academic stress and peer social support. Academic stress was measured using the Student-Life Stress Inventory (SSI) based on Gadzella's theoretical framework. The instrument consists of nine dimensions, namely frustration, conflict, pressure, changes, self-imposed demands, physiological reactions, emotional reactions, behavioral reactions, and cognitive appraisal. The instrument used in this study was adapted from Azahra (2018), who previously reported a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.900 based on 21 valid items. A re-evaluation of the instrument was conducted before the main data collection. In the first item analysis, four items (items 4, 7, 14, and 17) were excluded because their Corrected Item-Total Correlation coefficients were below 0.300. After removing these items, a second analysis was conducted. The remaining 17 items met the validity criterion, with Corrected Item-Total Correlation coefficients meeting or exceeding 0.300. The resulting scale demonstrated a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.752, indicating acceptable internal consistency.

Peer social support was measured using an instrument adapted from Primadhani (2022), based on Sarafino's conceptualization of social support. The instrument comprises five dimensions: emotional support, esteem support, instrumental support,

informational support, and network support. The original adapted instrument demonstrated a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.950, with 37 valid items. A new instrument trial was conducted with 35 respondents to evaluate the measure's validity and reliability in the present research context. In the first validity analysis, one item (item 21) was excluded because its Corrected Item-Total Correlation coefficient was below 0.300. After removing the item, a second analysis was performed on the remaining 36 items. All 36 items met the predetermined validity criterion, with Corrected Item-Total Correlation coefficients of at least 0.300. The final instrument demonstrated excellent internal consistency, with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.962.

Before hypothesis testing, the data were examined using assumption tests for normality and linearity. Normality was assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The data were considered normally distributed when the significance value was greater than 0.05. Linearity was assessed using the Deviation from Linearity statistic. The relationship between peer social support and academic stress was considered linear when the significance value for the deviation from linearity was greater than 0.05. After the assumptions were met, the research hypothesis was tested using simple linear regression analysis. This analysis determined whether peer social support significantly predicts academic stress among parallel-class students completing their undergraduate theses. Statistical significance was determined at the 0.05 level, with a p-value below 0.05 indicating a statistically significant predictive relationship. The regression analysis also provided information regarding the direction and magnitude of the relationship between peer social support and academic stress.

Results and discussion

Characteristics of respondents

The study involved 157 parallel-class students at Universitas Esa Unggul who were simultaneously working and completing their undergraduate theses. Table 1 presents the respondents' characteristics. The sample was predominantly female, with female respondents accounting for 72.6% and male respondents for 27.4%. In terms of employment status, the largest proportion of respondents were contract employees (38.2%), followed by interns (35.0%) and permanent employees (26.8%). Regarding work arrangements, most respondents worked under regular office-hour arrangements (59.9%), followed by freelance work (20.4%) and shift-based work (19.7%). In terms of academic level, most respondents were in their eighth semester (86.0%), while the remaining respondents were beyond the eighth semester (14.0%). Overall, respondents were predominantly female eighth-semester students working as contract employees under office-hour arrangements.

Table 1 characteristics of respondents

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	114	72.6
	Male	43	27.4
Employment status	Contract employee	60	38.2
	Intern	55	35.0
	Permanent employee	42	26.8
Work arrangement	Office hours	94	59.9
	Freelance	32	20.4
	Shift work	31	19.7

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Semester	Semester 8	135	86.0
	> Semester 8	22	14.0
Total		157	100.0

Source: primary data, processed

Descriptive results

Descriptive categorization indicated that respondents' perceptions of peer social support were relatively divided between the low and high categories. Slightly more respondents perceived their peer social support as low, while the remainder perceived the support they received from peers as high. This pattern suggests that although peer relationships are present among respondents, the level of support students experience is not uniformly strong. A similar distribution was observed for academic stress. The proportion of respondents categorized as experiencing low academic stress was slightly higher than that of respondents experiencing high academic stress. These findings indicate that working students completing their undergraduate theses experience varying levels of academic stress. The relatively balanced distribution also suggests that the research population contains meaningful variation in both peer social support and academic stress, allowing the relationship between the two variables to be examined.

Assumption testing

Before hypothesis testing, normality and linearity assumptions were examined. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test produced a significance value of 0.600, which exceeded the predetermined significance level. Thus, the data were considered normally distributed. The linearity test also showed a Deviation from Linearity significance value of 0.799, indicating that the relationship between peer social support and academic stress met the assumption of linearity. Therefore, the data fulfilled the assumptions required for the subsequent simple linear regression analysis.

Hypothesis testing

The hypothesis was tested using simple linear regression to determine whether peer social support significantly predicted academic stress among parallel-class students working on and completing their undergraduate theses. The results showed a statistically significant negative regression coefficient, indicating that higher peer social support was associated with lower academic stress. The negative regression coefficient showed that the direction of the relationship was consistent with the proposed hypothesis. The regression equation was $Y = 78.232 - 0.103X$, indicating an inverse relationship between peer social support and academic stress. The coefficient of determination showed that peer social support explained 8.4% of the variance in academic stress, whereas the remaining 91.6% was attributable to other factors not examined in the present study. The complete results of the hypothesis test are presented in Table 2. The results support the proposed hypothesis that peer social support is negatively associated with academic stress among parallel-class students at Universitas Esa Unggul who are working and completing their undergraduate theses.

Table 2 simple linear regression results

Predictor	B	t	p	R ²	Decision
Peer social support	-0.103	-3.760	< .001	.084	H1 supported

Note. dependent variable = academic stress.

Source: primary data, processed

The findings show that peer social support is significantly and negatively associated with academic stress among working parallel-class students completing their undergraduate theses. In other words, students who perceive greater peer support tend to experience lower academic stress. Conversely, students who perceive limited peer support tend to be more vulnerable to academic stress. This finding indicates that peer relationships represent an important interpersonal resource for students who must simultaneously manage academic and occupational demands. This finding can be understood in light of the particular circumstances faced by working students. Completing an undergraduate thesis requires sustained concentration, independent work, academic persistence, and regular engagement with the research process. At the same time, working students must allocate their time and energy to occupational responsibilities. The simultaneous demands of employment and academic completion can create competing demands for limited personal resources. Previous research has shown that working students face challenges related to time management, physical fatigue, and maintaining concentration while fulfilling their academic responsibilities (Febrianti et al., 2020; Rahman & Qodariah, 2025). When academic demands are perceived as exceeding the resources available to manage them, academic stress may emerge (Agudelo et al., 2025). Within this context, social resources provided by peers can become particularly meaningful.

The findings further suggest that peer social support can function as a protective resource in the context of thesis completion. Students do not necessarily experience thesis-related difficulties in isolation. Peers facing similar academic demands can provide a sense of shared experience and understanding. This is particularly relevant for parallel-class students who may simultaneously face the pressures of work and academic completion. Having peers who understand the difficulty of balancing employment and thesis responsibilities may reduce feelings of isolation and make academic challenges feel more manageable. This interpretation aligns with Sarafino's conceptualization of social support, which identifies emotional, esteem, instrumental, informational, and network support as important forms of social support (Mulyadi et al., 2020). For working students completing their theses, emotional support may be expressed through listening to complaints, providing empathy, and offering reassurance when students experience fatigue or frustration. Esteem support may be provided through appreciation, encouragement, and recognition of students' progress in completing their thesis. Instrumental support may take the form of practical assistance, such as helping distribute research questionnaires, discussing data analysis procedures, or assisting with technical aspects of thesis preparation. Informational support can be provided by sharing journal references, research-related information, and experiences related to academic supervision. Meanwhile, network support may emerge through a sense of belonging and togetherness among students who experience similar academic and occupational demands.

The finding is also consistent with previous empirical research. Ruihua et al. (2025) found that peer social support was significantly related to academic stress among working university students, with greater social support associated with lower academic stress. Similarly, Lestari & Purnamasari (2022) reported a negative relationship between peer social support and academic stress among university students. Handara & Irafahmi (2022) also identified social support as an external protective resource that can help students cope with the demands associated with completing their undergraduate theses. In addition, findings from Misalia et al. (2022) demonstrated the relevance of peer support to psychological difficulties among final-

year students by showing its relationship with anxiety during the thesis-writing process. Taken together, these studies provide converging evidence that supportive peer relationships may help students manage the psychological consequences of demanding academic situations.

The present finding can also be interpreted through the stress-and-coping perspective. Academic demands do not necessarily produce the same psychological consequences for every student because individuals differ in the resources available to them when responding to stressful circumstances. Peer support may provide resources that help students interpret and respond to academic difficulties more adaptively. Emotional reassurance can reduce feelings of being overwhelmed, informational support can help students identify solutions to academic problems, and instrumental support can reduce the practical burden associated with completing academic tasks. Consequently, supportive peers may help students see thesis-related demands as more manageable rather than as demands they must face entirely on their own. The finding is particularly meaningful when considered alongside the characteristics of the research population. Most respondents were eighth-semester students who were also working, and most worked under regular office-hour arrangements. This situation may create substantial competition for time and energy between employment and thesis completion. Students working during regular office hours may have limited opportunities to work on their theses during weekdays, requiring them to complete academic tasks outside working hours. Under these circumstances, peer support may provide an important source of encouragement and practical assistance. The social experience of having peers who are facing comparable challenges may also strengthen students' sense that their difficulties are shared rather than experienced individually.

However, the relatively modest explanatory contribution of peer social support indicates that academic stress cannot be understood solely through peer relationships. Although peer support represents an important protective resource, a substantial proportion of variation in academic stress remains associated with other factors. Previous literature has identified several potential contributors to academic stress, including self-efficacy, self-regulation, psychological resilience, achievement motivation, coping strategies, workload, and other environmental demands (Nurcahyani & Prastuti, 2020; Subandy & Jatmika, 2020; Yusuf & Yusuf, 2020). This finding is important because it suggests that interventions aimed at reducing academic stress should not rely exclusively on strengthening peer relationships. From a practical perspective, universities can use these findings to develop peer-based support mechanisms specifically for working students completing their theses. Universities and academic programs could facilitate peer discussion groups, thesis-support communities, peer mentoring, or structured academic sharing sessions. Such programs could provide both emotional and informational support while creating opportunities for students to exchange experiences regarding thesis preparation, supervision, research methods, and time management. Academic supervisors and student support services could also encourage students to maintain constructive peer networks rather than approaching thesis completion as an entirely individual process.

The findings also have implications for students themselves. Working students may benefit from intentionally building supportive peer relationships and actively seeking appropriate assistance when they encounter academic difficulties. Peer support does not necessarily require intensive or formal intervention; regular communication, sharing academic information, discussing research problems, providing encouragement, and maintaining a sense of companionship may contribute to a more supportive

academic environment. At the same time, students should continue developing individual coping and self-regulation resources because peer support alone is unlikely to address all sources of academic stress. For future research, the findings suggest examining other psychological and contextual factors that may explain academic stress among working students. Variables such as self-efficacy, academic resilience, self-regulation, coping strategies, workload, work-study conflict, supervisor support, and time-management ability could be investigated alongside peer social support. Future studies could also examine whether peer social support moderates or mediates the relationship between academic demands and academic stress. Such approaches would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms through which social support protects students from psychological stress.

Future research should also consider expanding participant characteristics and research settings. The present study focused specifically on parallel-class students at Universitas Esa Unggul who were working and completing their theses. Research involving students from different universities, academic disciplines, employment arrangements, and socioeconomic backgrounds could help determine whether the observed pattern is consistent across different student populations. Longitudinal research would also be valuable because academic stress and social support may change throughout the thesis-writing process. Following students from the beginning to the completion of their theses could provide stronger evidence regarding changes in stress and the role of peer support over time. Overall, the findings indicate that peer social support is an important interpersonal resource associated with lower academic stress among working students completing their undergraduate theses. The results reinforce the view that thesis completion should not be understood solely as an individual academic task but also as a process embedded within students' social environments. Supportive peer relationships may help students feel understood, obtain practical and informational assistance, maintain motivation, and cope more effectively with the competing demands of work and academic completion. Therefore, strengthening supportive peer environments is a promising strategy for helping working students navigate the demanding transition toward completing their undergraduate studies.

Conclusions

This study concludes that peer social support is significantly and negatively associated with academic stress among working parallel-class students at Universitas Esa Unggul who are completing their undergraduate theses. Students who perceived greater peer support tended to experience lower levels of academic stress, whereas students with lower perceived peer support tended to report higher levels of academic stress. These findings indicate that peer social support represents an important interpersonal resource for students who must simultaneously manage academic and occupational demands during the thesis-completion process. The findings are consistent with previous research suggesting that supportive peer relationships can help students cope with academic demands and psychological pressure.

The findings contribute to the literature on academic stress by highlighting the importance of the social environment, particularly peer relationships, for working students completing their undergraduate theses. Practically, the findings suggest that universities and academic programs should consider developing supportive peer environments through peer mentoring, thesis discussion groups, academic support communities, and opportunities for students to exchange information and encouragement. Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. The non-experimental,

cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causal relationships between peer social support and academic stress. In addition, the study focused on parallel-class students from a single university, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to students at other institutions or in different academic contexts. The study also examined peer social support as a single predictor, although multiple psychological and contextual factors may influence academic stress.

Future research should address these limitations by involving students from multiple universities and diverse academic and employment backgrounds to improve the generalizability of the findings. Longitudinal or other prospective designs are also recommended to examine changes in peer social support and academic stress throughout the thesis-completion process and to provide stronger evidence regarding their temporal relationship. Future studies could additionally incorporate other relevant variables, such as self-efficacy, academic resilience, self-regulation, coping strategies, work-study conflict, workload, supervisor support, and time-management ability. Examining peer social support as a potential moderator or mediator may also provide a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms through which social support may protect working students from academic stress.

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