The Power of Peers: Understanding the Link Between Social Support and Grit Among Working Students

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ABSTRACT

In the modern academic sphere, students often juggle work and studies, leading to challenges in maintaining academic progress. A key trait associated with managing these challenges is grit, defined as long-term perseverance and passion for goals. This research investigated the correlation between peer social support and grit among part-time working students in Salatiga, Central Java. Utilizing Multi-stage Snowball Sampling for participant selection, the study collected data from 120 undergraduate students, employing the Social Support Scale and the Grit Scale. Statistical analysis confirmed a significant positive relationship between peer social support and grit. Given the importance of grit in academic and professional outcomes, and the pivotal role of peer social support in cultivating it, this study underscores the need for educational interventions that enhance social support structures for part-time working students. The findings offer vital insights for educators and policymakers, advocating for the integration of peer-driven support systems in academic settings.

Keywords: peer social support; grit; part-time working students; academic achievement; resilience

INTRODUCTION

In today's academic landscape, students pursuing higher education, whether in private or public institutions, face various challenges in adapting to their college environment and managing their finances, especially when coming from out-of-town (Siswoyo, 2007). According to Pertiwi (2019), students need to adjust to the demands of their academic environment and effectively manage their finances, especially if they come from different cities. Many students find themselves working part-time jobs to support their educational expenses. However, juggling work and studies can lead to various challenges such as time management, discipline, maintaining physical health, and low self-management skills.

The phenomenon observed by Mardelina and Muhson (2017) highlights that students working part-time jobs while studying might experience reduced study engagement due to the time commitment involved in working. This situation demands effective time and commitment management to balance work and academic responsibilities. Failure to do so can result in neglecting academic tasks and reduced concentration during classes. Thus, students who work while studying need to carefully consider their approach to avoid negative impacts on their academic progress. Moreover, research by Nurcahyani and Prastuti (2021) suggests that part-time working students often struggle with self-control and self-regulation, necessitating the adoption of appropriate and effective strategies for managing work and studies simultaneously.

Grit, defined as the ability to maintain long-term perseverance and passion towards achieving goals (Duckworth, 2007), plays a significant role in students' ability to handle the challenges of working and studying. Grit involves traits like passion, practice, purpose, and hope (Duckworth, 2017). Hochanadel and Finamore (2015) emphasize that grit helps

individuals shift their perspective, emphasizing that success isn't solely dependent on intelligence, but also on the ability to overcome obstacles and challenges to achieve long-term goals. Grit, a positive non-cognitive trait, relies on strong self-motivation and determination to achieve long-term goals. Yang and Wu (2021) suggest that grit is positively correlated with social support, hope, and life meaning. Social support and hope are pivotal factors that provide valuable references for future grit development (Arjanto, 2017). Conversely, individuals with low grit levels, as highlighted by Mulyarti (2022), can experience negative consequences, including academic stress, procrastination, poor academic achievement, reduced subjective well-being, and a lack of growth mindset. Given these potential negative impacts, strategies are required to address and enhance grit in part-time working students, supported by motivation and assistance from family and friends to navigate challenges effectively.

Based on interviews conducted on January 25, 2023, with three part-time working students, issues in their academic journey were identified. These issues included neglecting studies due to comfort in their jobs, difficulty comprehending course material, low self-motivation, neglecting assignments, poor time management, mood fluctuations, and lateness to classes. Despite facing these challenges, the participants remained committed to improving and ensuring their academic success alongside their part-time work commitments.

Duckworth (2017) delineates two factors contributing to grit: internal factors (passion, practice, purpose, and hope) and external factors (Parenting for grit, the playing fields, and a culture of grit). Rosalina (2016) emphasizes the role of social support, specifically from peers, in fostering grit in students. Social support from peers contributes positively to grit, promoting a sense of belonging and positive influence within peer groups. According to Yunere et al. (2021), peer support involves information exchange about behavior suitable for adolescents to interact with their environment, allowing them to explore various roles to develop their identity optimally. Peer support, especially emotional support through empathy and concern, enhances self-esteem, confidence, and a sense of belonging, as stated by Saputro & Sugiarti (2021). This support is crucial during the transitional phase of adolescence. Pangaribuan and Savitri's study (2019) demonstrates a significant positive influence of peer social support on grit among choir members. Meanwhile, Tanjung and Satyawan's research (2021) reveals a positive correlation between social support and grit among military students. Mulyarti's findings (2022) emphasize the contribution of social support to grit, showcasing its role in helping students adjust to academic demands and recover from setbacks. Qurratuaini et al. (2022) underscore the positive and significant relationship between social support and grit among students. However, Erika's study (2021) suggests that the connection between social support and grit may not always be significant, indicating that the association may vary.

In light of these findings and the limited research available, the researcher aims to explore the relationship between peer social support and grit among part-time working students, leading to the study titled "The Relationship Between Peer Social Support and Grit Among Part-Time Working Students." The study seeks to uncover how peer social support influences grit among students balancing work and studies, contributing to the understanding of this important dynamic.

METHOD

In this study, a more complex research methodology is employed to deepen the understanding of the relationship between peer social support and grit among part-time working students. This study uses a quantitative research design to explore this phenomenon.

Study Population and Sampling

The population of this research comprises undergraduate students who are currently employed part-time in Salatiga, Central Java, Indonesia. A more sophisticated sampling technique called "Multi-stage Snowball Sampling" is utilized (Sadler, Lee, Lim, & Fullerton, 2010). In this approach, initial participants, known as "seeds," are asked to recruit other potential participants who meet the set criteria. The process continues until the sample size reaches a saturation point where no new information is obtained. Multi-stage snowball sampling allows for a more varied and potentially more representative sample of the population in question.

Criteria for Inclusion and Exclusion

The criteria for selecting participants include: 1) currently enrolled in an undergraduate program in a higher educational institution; 2) currently working part-time; 3) willing to participate in the study; 4) over the age of 18 and; 5) students who are not currently working part-time or who are not currently enrolled in an undergraduate program will be excluded.

Data Collection

Questionnaires will be employed to gather data on both social support and grit. The Social Support Scale (Sherbourne & Stewart, 1991) and the Grit Scale (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007) will be administered. All questionnaires will be distributed electronically to ensure a broad and accessible approach.

Data Analysis

Collected data will be analyzed using advanced statistical techniques in SPSS. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) will be used to analyze the relationship between variables as it allows for examination of multiple relationships simultaneously (Kline, 2015). SEM can also take into account the error measurements, offering a more precise view of data.

Ethical Considerations

All participants will provide informed consent and be assured of their anonymity and the confidentiality of their data. The study has been reviewed and approved by an ethics committee to ensure adherence to ethical standards. The application of multi-stage snowball sampling and advanced statistical methods like SEM will contribute to the robustness of the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Data Gathering Process

The study was conducted on May 12, 2023, leveraging digital avenues like Google Forms for survey dissemination via WhatsApp and Instagram. This technique was employed to reach the entire population of part-time working students in higher education institutions in Salatiga, Central Java.

Table 1. Responden Detail

Criteria	Details
Total Participants	120
Males	50
Females	70

The response rate was impressive with 120 participants, including 50 males and 70 females, completing the questionnaire.

Preliminary Data Assessments: Normality and Linearity

Based on the normality test (Table 2), both the grit and peer social support variables demonstrated a normal distribution, with significance levels exceeding 0.05.

Table 2. Normality Test Results of Peer Social Support and Grit

		X	Y
N		120	120
Normal Parameters[a,b]	*Mean*	91.73	42.74
	Std. Deviation	12.723	5.883
Most Extreme Differences	*Absolute*	.118	.101
	Positive	.047	.052
	Negative	-.118	-.101
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.295	1.105
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.070	.174

Notably, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z value for grit was 1.105 with a p-value of 0.174, and for peer social support, it was 1.295 with a p-value of 0.070. These findings align with established guidelines for data normality (Field, 2009; George & Mallery, 2010; Pallant, 2013). The linearity test further fortified the data's integrity, revealing a linear relationship between the variables (F=16.953, p=0.000) (Table 3).

Table 3. Linearity Test Results between Peer Social Support and Grit

	F	Sig.	Keterangan
Linearity	16,953	0,000	Linear
Deviation from linearity	0,822	0,759	

This is consistent with the recommendations by Laerd Statistics (2015) and other seminal works (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007; Hair et al., 2010).

Core Analysis: Pearson Correlation

The central hypothesis test, using Pearson's correlation, confirmed a significant positive relationship between peer social support and grit, with a coefficient of r=0.365 (Table 3). This result corroborates prior research by Azwan, Herlina, & Karim (2015), Sarafino & Smith (2012), and extends it by contributing empirical evidence from the specific demographic of part-time working students in Salatiga.

Table 4. Correlation Test Results between Peer Social Support and Grit in Part-Time Working Students

		Peer Social Support	*Grit*
Peer Social Support	Pearson Correlation	1	.365**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
Grit	Pearson Correlation	.365**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The correlation coefficient signifies a moderate relationship (Cohen, 1988; Mukaka, 2012), demonstrating that as peer social support increases, grit levels also tend to rise. This builds upon the work of Duckworth et al. (2007), who initially posited that grit was crucial for long-term achievements.

Implications

The study's findings illuminate the vital role of peer social support in shaping grit, resonating with several studies (Rashid & Seligman, 2018; Eskreis-Winkler et al., 2014; Maddi, 2006). This adds to the growing evidence that social environments significantly affect various dimensions of student development, including academic success (Wentzel, 1998; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Furrer & Skinner, 2003), psychological well-being (Uchino, 2006; Lakey & Orehek, 2011; Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010), and overall life satisfaction (Diener & Seligman, 2002; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005).

The concept of grit is also subject to cultural variables (Cross, 2014; Datu et al., 2016), making this study valuable for understanding this construct in the Indonesian context. Peer social support, particularly in collectivist societies like Indonesia, can be even more impactful (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995). Therefore, this study offers crucial insights for educators and policymakers interested in fostering grit in a culturally sensitive manner. Given that part-time working students often face unique challenges (King, 2002; Carney-Crompton & Tan, 2002), enhancing social support structures can be invaluable. The effects of such support reach beyond grit and can improve general mental health, as argued by Schwarzer and Leppin (1991) and Cohen & Wills (1985). Our findings significantly extend the body of literature by adding empirical evidence of the relationship between peer social support and grit among part-time working students in Salatiga, Central Java. The study's results call for the

development of interventions and programs that leverage peer social support as a tool for nurturing grit, a trait linked with perseverance and long-term achievements.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms a statistically significant positive correlation between peer social support and grit among part-time working students in Salatiga, Central Java. Employing rigorous data assessments for normality and linearity, the research adds empirical weight to existing literature, extending its applicability to a specific demographic in a culturally distinct setting. These findings suggest that bolstering social support mechanisms could be a viable strategy for fostering grit—a quality associated with perseverance and long-term achievement—in this student population.

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