

The Role of Self-Efficacy in Predicting Academic Buoyancy Among Working Students in Higher Education

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Abstract

Students who work while pursuing higher education face dual demands that potentially induce academic stress and affect their capacity to navigate daily scholastic challenges. In this context, academic buoyancy emerges as a crucial aspect that helps students maintain academic engagement and adaptively overcome learning barriers. However, research examining academic buoyancy among working students in Indonesia remains relatively limited. This study aims to analyze the influence of self-efficacy on academic buoyancy among working students at a private university in Indonesia. Utilizing a quantitative approach, this study employed a correlational design and simple linear regression analysis. Participants consisted of 103 working students selected through a purposive sampling technique. Self-efficacy was measured using the General Self-Efficacy Scale, while academic buoyancy was assessed based on the Martin and Marsh framework. The results demonstrated that self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect on academic buoyancy ($\beta = 0.399$; $p < .001$). The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.159$) indicates that self-efficacy explains 15.9% of the variance in academic buoyancy. These findings confirm that belief in one's capabilities plays a vital role in helping working students manage academic pressures; Therefore, efforts to enhance academic buoyancy should prioritize strengthening self-efficacy while reinforcing social support through peer support and university counseling programs, thereby enabling working students to better cope with academic challenges.

Keywords: Self-efficacy; Academic buoyancy; Working students; Higher education; Academic resilience.

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INTRODUCTION

Students in higher education frequently encounter various academic demands, such as completing assignments, preparing reports, and managing exam pressures within limited timeframes. This situation becomes significantly more complex for individuals navigating dual roles as both employees and students. In the modern era, an increasing number of students choose to work while studying to meet financial needs, gain practical experience, and enhance their professional competitiveness. However, the combination of scholastic and occupational demands often culminates in psychological stress, physical exhaustion, and diminished academic performance. Consequently, non-traditional or working

students urgently require academic adaptability skills to sustain optimal academic performance amidst the multifaceted pressures they encounter.

Students' participation in the workforce—whether formal or informal—results in dual roles that require more complex adaptation than non-working students due to overlapping academic and job demands. This situation typically manifests in limited time for independent study, multidimensional fatigue, and substantial psychological stress. Weak self-regulation in balancing university life and employment can obstruct academic engagement, decrease academic achievement, and induce stress. Since early adulthood demands independence, social responsibility, and career establishment, resilience toward academic challenges is vital for working students to maintain consistent performance.

The phenomenon of working students is closely linked to early adulthood, a developmental period marked by expectations of financial independence, social responsibility, and career preparation (Rahmah & Khoirunnisa, 2023). Financial necessity, paying for university tuition, and gaining professional experience are the main reasons why students choose to work (Hakim & Hasmira, 2022). This condition is supported by data from the Central Bureau of Statistics, which shows that 6.98% of the Indonesian population aged 10–24 manage both study and work concurrently (Oktapiana, D., Annisa, N. M., & Firdasannah, A., 2024). This trend demonstrates that the dual role of student-worker is an increasingly common reality in Indonesian higher education. As a result, this situation forces students to balance academic pressure and work responsibilities at the same time, making their ability to self-regulate and adapt to academic stress a vital area of study.

One of the important psychological skills for working students is academic buoyancy. Academic buoyancy describes a student's capacity to effectively navigate and manage routine educational pressures obstacles such as exam pressure, difficult assignments, low grades, and other academic demands (Martin & Marsh, 2008). This concept is important because it relates not only to the ability to survive challenging academic situations but also to the ability to adapt to routine academic challenges. Students with good academic buoyancy tend to be better able to maintain motivation, learning engagement, and academic performance despite facing pressure during the course of study (Jahedizadeh, Ghonsooly, & Ghanizadeh, 2019).

Academic buoyancy is influenced by various psychological factors, one of which is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy relates to an individual's belief in their ability to complete tasks and face various academic challenges (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Individuals with high self-efficacy tend to be more optimistic, have better perseverance, and are able to manage academic pressure more adaptively. In the context of working students, confidence in one's abilities is important because it can help students maintain academic performance amidst the demands of work and study simultaneously (Putwain, Gallard, & Beaumont, 2020).

Various previous studies have shown a positive relationship between self-efficacy and academic buoyancy. Students with high academic buoyancy tend to demonstrate stronger self-efficacy in dealing with academic challenges (Ye, Xie, & Ye, 2025). Similarly, other studies have reported that academic self-efficacy significantly predicts students' academic buoyancy (Suhesty & Basuki, 2022). However, existing research has predominantly focused on school-aged students and traditional university students, leaving limited attention to working university

students who face substantially different academic circumstances. In particular, empirical studies examining academic buoyancy among non-regular or evening-class students in the Indonesian higher education context remain scarce. This population is characterized by complex work-study role conflicts, time constraints, professional responsibilities, and academic demands that differ considerably from those experienced by traditional full-time students. Consequently, the extent to which self-efficacy contributes to academic buoyancy among working students remains insufficiently understood. Addressing this gap is important because understanding the relationship between self-efficacy and academic buoyancy in this unique population may provide empirical evidence for developing effective academic support strategies for working students in Indonesian higher education. Therefore, it is crucial to conduct research that specifically explores the role of self-efficacy in supporting academic buoyancy among this population. Such an investigation is essential to deepen our understanding of the psychological factors that contribute to their academic success.

Employee-level students are vulnerable to academic and psychological stress due to the demands of work and their studies. Research shows that working students often struggle to balance their time between work and academics, resulting in decreased academic performance (Hiunata & Linda, 2018). In addition, fatigue after work can also hinder the learning process and affect students' academic success (Putri, Yusuf, & Rozana, 2025). If this condition continues without good adaptation skills, it can cause stress that impacts the mental and physical health of students (Putwain, Gallard, & Beaumont, 2020).

A similar condition is found among working students at University X. This phenomenon was also found in the working students at University X, which consists of undergraduate and graduate students with diverse work, social, and economic backgrounds. Employee class students at this university generally take classes outside of work hours, such as evenings and weekends, thus facing challenges in managing time, energy, and academic readiness. This condition indicates a variation in students' abilities to cope with daily academic pressures. Therefore, employee class students at University X provide an important context for examining the relationship between self-efficacy and academic buoyancy. Based on the aforementioned description, this study aims to analyze the influence of self-efficacy on academic buoyancy among working students at University X.

Academic Buoyancy

Academic buoyancy is an individual's ability to face various daily academic obstacles such as assignment pressure, deadlines, low grades, and complex learning demands adaptively (Collie, Martin, Bottrell, & Armstrong, 2016). In contrast to academic resilience, which emphasizes the ability to survive in difficult and prolonged academic situations, academic buoyancy focuses on students' ability to overcome routine academic challenges that often arise during the learning process (Martin & Marsh, 2020). In the context of higher education, academic buoyancy is an important concept because students are required to maintain motivation, learning engagement, and academic performance despite facing various academic pressures continuously.

For working students, academic buoyancy plays an increasingly important role because they must simultaneously juggle academic and work demands. This often

leads to fatigue, psychological stress, limited study time, and difficulty maintaining academic consistency. Students with good academic buoyancy tend to be better able to manage academic pressure, maintain their commitment to learning, and remain actively involved in the learning process despite facing various obstacles while carrying out their dual roles. Previous research also shows that academic buoyancy is related to academic engagement, learning motivation, and students' ability to adapt to higher education environments (Elmi, Delavar, Dortaj, & Asadzadeh, 2020).

Self-Efficacy

An individual's perception of their ability to handle challenges, perform required activities, and accomplish expected goals is referred to as self-efficacy (Waddington, 2023). Students' beliefs in their own capabilities play an essential role in determining how they handle academic stress, remain motivated throughout the learning process, and adjust to the challenges encountered in educational contexts (Huang & Kou, 2025). A high sense of self-efficacy encourages students to trust their academic capabilities, manage their own learning processes efficiently, and persist in educational activities despite encountering pressure or adversity. (Hayat, Shateri, Amini, & Shokrpour, 2020). In addition, self-efficacy is also related to students' ability to develop effective coping strategies when facing academic obstacles or psychological stress during the learning process.

For working students, self-efficacy becomes an increasingly important psychological factor because they must be able to juggle academic and work demands simultaneously (Rahayu, Hardina, & Ninggrum, 2024). This situation often leads to academic pressure, fatigue, role conflict, and time constraints in completing coursework (Samaratunga, Kamardeen, & Chathurangi, 2025). When faced with these challenges, a strong sense of personal competence helps students remain motivated, regulate stress effectively, and continue performing their academic duties despite competing demands (Kobra, 2024). Research has consistently revealed that students with greater confidence in their abilities tend to adjust more successfully to academic environments, respond more adaptively to educational pressures, and report better psychological health compared with those who have weaker self-efficacy beliefs (Shin & Kim, 2021).

Conceptually, self-efficacy reflects an individual's belief in their ability to cope with varying levels of difficulty in tasks and situations (Bandura, 2023). A strong sense of self-efficacy enables individuals to respond more effectively to obstacles, remain persistent despite setbacks, and retain confidence in their ability to achieve intended outcomes (Etherton, Steele-Johnson, Salvano, & Kovacs, 2020). In the context of higher education, self-efficacy is an important psychological aspect that contributes to academic success, adaptability, and student resilience in facing various challenges during the college process (Liu, Wang, & Baik, 2023).

RESEARCH METHOD

Using a quantitative correlational framework, this research investigated the extent to which self-efficacy contributes to academic buoyancy in students balancing academic study with employment. This study utilized a correlational framework to evaluate the predictive contribution of self-efficacy to academic buoyancy by

positioning self-efficacy as the predictor variable and academic buoyancy as the criterion variable. A quantitative research approach was considered appropriate because it supported objective data collection for both variables and enabled the application of statistical procedures to examine their relationship. Simple linear regression was employed to determine whether self-efficacy significantly explained variations in academic buoyancy among students who combined academic study with employment.

The study participants consisted of 103 undergraduate students enrolled in the employee class at University X. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on the criteria that they were actively enrolled in the employee class program and simultaneously engaged in employment during their studies. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 10% margin of error from a population of [N] working students enrolled in the employee class program at University X. Based on this calculation, a minimum sample of [n] participants was required. A total of 103 students participated in the study, exceeding the minimum required sample size and therefore considered adequate to represent the target population. This technique was utilized because the study specifically targets students who maintain a dual role as both students and workers. The inclusion criteria for participants comprised active students aged 18–40 years who were employed in either the formal or informal sector during their studies. The selection of working students was based on their unique characteristics of facing simultaneous academic and occupational demands, which potentially subjects them to various academic pressures in their daily lives.

Self-efficacy was measured using the General Self-Efficacy Scale developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995) based on Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory. Meanwhile, academic buoyancy was measured using the academic buoyancy scale developed based on the concepts of Martin and Marsh (2010). All instruments used a four-point Likert scale, ranging from very inappropriate to very appropriate. The questionnaire was distributed online through an online platform to facilitate data collection from employee class students.

Before conducting the main data collection, the psychometric properties of the instruments were evaluated through validity and reliability testing to safeguard measurement quality. Reliability testing was predicated on Cronbach's Alpha estimations. The empirical analysis demonstrated coefficient values of 0.839 for the self-efficacy scale and 0.728 for the academic buoyancy scale. These findings confirm that both instruments possess robust internal consistency, thereby establishing their eligibility for assessing the study's variables. Next, classical assumption tests, including normality and linearity tests, were performed as prerequisites for simple linear regression analysis. Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 27 to examine the effect of self-efficacy on academic buoyancy in employee-level students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study involved 103 undergraduate students in the employee class at University X. The majority of respondents were female (60.2%) and were in the age range of 23–28 years (45.63%), which is included in the early adulthood category. Based on semester level, most respondents were from the 4th semester (28.2%). In addition,

as many as 62.1% of respondents reported having experienced academic difficulties and a decline in their grade point average while studying while working. These findings indicate that most participants faced academic challenges in carrying out their dual roles as students and workers.

The description of the demographic data of the research respondents can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Data Description

Sample Characteristics	Number of Respondents	
	N (student)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Man	41	39.8
Woman	62	60.2
Age		
18 - 22	31	30.1
23 - 28	47	45.63
29 - 34	21	20.39
35 - 40	4	3.88
Semester		
1	9	8.7
2	25	24.3
3	8	7.8
4	29	28.2
5	9	8.7
6	8	7.8
7	2	1.9
8	9	8.7
9	1	1
10	1	1
12	1	1
14	1	1
Have experienced academic difficulties and a decline in Grade Point Average (GPA)		
Yes	64	62.1
No	39	37.9

From the demographic table above, the majority of the study respondents were female students (62 people), while the number of male students was 41 people. The age range of the employee class students was mostly 23-28 years old (47 people), which is included in early adulthood. According to Hurlock, early adulthood is between the ages of 18-40 years and there is a transition to a new role in the social environment and is required to be independent. The respondents in this study were mostly 4th semester students with a total of 29 people, which also involved 33 first and second semester students.

The demographic data above illustrates the varying experiences and study durations of employee class students across various semester levels, from the first semester to the final semester. Questionnaire results indicate that 64 of the employee class students experienced academic difficulties and a drop in their Grade Point Average (GPA), while 39 students, including first and second semester

students, did not experience academic difficulties or a drop in their Grade Point Average (GPA).

Reliability test results showed that the self-efficacy scale had a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.839, while the academic buoyancy scale obtained a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.728. These values indicate that both instruments have a good and consistent level of reliability, making them suitable for use in measuring research variables.

Table 2. Categorization of Self-Efficacy Variable Data in Employee Class Students

Categorization	Interval	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Tall	$X > 36$	18	17
Currently	$28 \leq X < 36$	76	74
Low	$X < 28$	9	9
Amount		103	100

The categorization results showed that the majority of respondents were in the moderate self-efficacy category (74%), while only 17% were in the high category. This finding indicates that the majority of students in the employee class have sufficient self-confidence to face the demands of both academics and work simultaneously. However, there were still some students with low self-efficacy (9%), indicating doubts about their ability to complete daily academic demands. This condition may be influenced by the pressure of dual roles, limited study time, and the workload faced by students in the employee class. This trend likely underscores the distinct reality of working students; while successfully navigating the competing demands of university and employment fosters a foundational sense of confidence, the persistent stressors inherent in this dual lifestyle may concurrently hinder the cultivation of more robust efficacy beliefs.

Table 3. Categorization of Academic Buoyancy Variable Data for Employee Class Students

Category	Interval	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Tall	$X > 55$	41	40
Currently	$45 \leq X < 55$	15	14
Low	$X < 45$	47	46
Amount		103	100

Descriptive analysis reveals that a plurality of working students exhibit low academic buoyancy (46%). This outcome underscores the pervasive difficulties this cohort experiences when navigating routine scholastic adversities, including heavy course loads, rigid time constraints, and volatile academic performance. This vulnerability appears deeply intertwined with the dual-role strains inherent in balancing academic duties against occupational obligations. Intrigued by a apparent paradox, this trend diverges from the self-efficacy data, where a majority of participants scored within the moderate tier. Such a discrepancy indicates that subjective confidence in one's capabilities does not automatically translate into adaptive coping strategies against daily academic stressors.

While these students may maintain a positive cognitive appraisal of their capabilities, the unrelenting pressure of concurrent employment, compounded by

multidimensional exhaustion and restricted study windows, likely erodes their real-time resilience during academic setbacks. Ultimately, academic buoyancy operates as a multifaceted construct governed not merely by self-efficacy, but also by external variables such as perceived social support, emotional regulation strategies, academic engagement, and institutional environments. Concurrently, it is worth noting that 40% of the sample demonstrated high academic buoyancy, confirming that a resilient segment of working students successfully preserves learning motivation and adaptive behaviors despite persistent structural pressures.

Table 4. Simple Linear Regression Coefficient of Self-Efficacy on Academic Buoyancy

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	
(Constant)	32,238	4,118		7,829	<0.001
<i>Self-efficacy</i>	0.558	0.127	0.399	4,377	<0.001

The results of a simple linear regression analysis showed that self-efficacy had a positive and significant effect on academic buoyancy ($\beta = 0.399$; $p < 0.001$). This finding suggests that students with higher levels of self-efficacy tend to have better abilities in facing various daily academic challenges. Belief in one's abilities helps students maintain motivation, manage academic stress, and remain engaged in the learning process despite facing the demands of work and study simultaneously.

Table 5. Results of Simple Linear Regression Test of Self-Efficacy Against Academic Buoyancy

R Square	Deviation from Linearity	Sig.
0.159	0.287	< 0.001

The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.159 reveals that self-efficacy explains 15.9% of the variance in academic buoyancy among the working student cohort. While this predictive path is statistically significant, its modest magnitude underscores that academic buoyancy is a multifaceted construct governed by an array of psychological and contextual determinants extending far beyond individual self-efficacy. This outcome implies that cognitive confidence in one's capabilities constitutes only a partial buffer against daily scholastic adversities. Other critical dimensions—such as perceived social support, occupational loads, emotion regulation strategies, scholastic engagement, psychological well-being, and institutional support systems—likely exert substantial influence on a student's capacity to navigate setbacks and sustain educational persistence. For working students, reconciling academic benchmarks with professional mandates introduces unique systemic stressors that can easily compromise their real-time adaptability. Consequently, interventions designed to fortify academic buoyancy must transcend isolated efforts to boost self-efficacy, opting instead for holistic approaches that incorporate the broader environmental and psychosocial resources necessary to foster student adjustment and systemic resilience.

The results of this study indicate that self-efficacy plays a significant role in increasing academic buoyancy among working students. Rather than merely reflecting confidence in one's academic abilities, self-efficacy appears to function

as a psychological resource that helps students interpret academic challenges as manageable rather than overwhelming. According to Bandura (1997), individuals with strong self-efficacy are more likely to perceive difficulties as challenges to be mastered, thereby promoting persistence, adaptive coping strategies, and sustained effort. For working students, who must simultaneously meet academic requirements and professional responsibilities, this psychological mechanism becomes particularly important. The dual demands of work and study often generate time constraints, physical exhaustion, and psychological stress. In such circumstances, students with higher self-efficacy are more likely to regulate their learning behaviors effectively, maintain focus on academic goals, and adapt to setbacks without experiencing substantial declines in motivation (Honicke & Broadbent, 2016).

The influence of self-efficacy on academic buoyancy may also operate through students' ability to manage stress and maintain positive expectations regarding academic success. When encountering academic difficulties, students with strong self-efficacy tend to believe that their efforts can produce desired outcomes, reducing the likelihood of disengagement and academic helplessness. Conversely, students with lower self-efficacy may interpret challenges as indicators of personal inadequacy, increasing vulnerability to academic stress, fatigue, and reduced learning engagement. Therefore, self-efficacy contributes not only to academic confidence but also to the regulation of emotional and psychological responses that enable students to remain resilient while fulfilling their dual roles as workers and students (Salmela-Aro & Upadyaya, 2020).

Although self-efficacy significantly predicted academic buoyancy, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 15.9\%$) indicates that a substantial proportion of variance in academic buoyancy remains unexplained by the current model. This finding suggests that self-efficacy represents only one of several factors influencing students' ability to overcome everyday academic challenges. Working students operate within complex academic and occupational environments in which various personal, social, and contextual factors may contribute to academic buoyancy. Potential factors include social support from family, peers, and lecturers; academic engagement; resilience; emotional regulation; work-study balance; learning motivation; and institutional support systems. These variables may interact with self-efficacy in shaping students' capacity to cope with academic setbacks and maintain academic functioning despite adversity.

The results of this study are consistent with previous research demonstrating a positive relationship between self-efficacy and academic buoyancy (Hoffmann, Dana, Dörrenbächer-Ulrich, & Perels, 2023). However, the present findings extend the existing literature by highlighting that the role of self-efficacy remains relevant even among working students, a population that experiences distinctive challenges compared with traditional university students. The relatively modest explanatory power of the model further suggests that academic buoyancy among working students should be understood as a multidimensional construct influenced by both individual psychological resources and broader environmental conditions. Consequently, future research should incorporate additional predictors and more comprehensive models to better understand the factors that foster academic buoyancy within the context of working students in higher education.

CONCLUSION

This inquiry evaluated how self-efficacy predicts academic buoyancy within the working student population at University X. The empirical data demonstrated a positive and statistically significant relationship, implying that heightened confidence in personal competence enables individuals to effectively manage daily scholastic hurdles alongside their professional obligations. These insights reinforce the role of self-efficacy as a vital psychological asset that sustains student motivation, perseverance, and versatility under academic strain.

While the predictive path of self-efficacy toward academic buoyancy achieved statistical significance, its overall explanatory power remained relatively modest ($R^2 = 0.159$). This low variance suggests that academic buoyancy possesses a multidimensional architecture governed by diverse psychosocial and situational variables extending beyond personal confidence. Consequently, institutional or therapeutic interventions designed to fortify buoyancy within the working student cohort must transcend isolated self-efficacy enhancement; instead, they should adopt a holistic approach that integrates robust social support networks, classroom engagement strategies, emotion regulation techniques, and tailored institutional accommodations.

This research broadens the empirical scope of academic buoyancy literature by contextualizing its framework within the unique experiences of employed undergraduates in Indonesian tertiary education—an under-researched cohort in prior scholarly works. To build upon these insights, future inquiries are encouraged to explore alternative psychological and situational predictors of buoyancy. Additionally, utilizing larger, cross-institutional samples from diverse higher education settings will be critical to enhancing the external validity and generalizability of the outcomes.

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