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Examining Factors Influencing Work–Study Balance and Academic Performance among University Students in Cambodia

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ABSTRACT

Background: Balancing employment and academic responsibilities has become a growing challenge for university students in Cambodia, yet empirical evidence on the determinants of work–study balance remains limited. **Objective:** This study develops an integrated model unifying time management, self-regulation, goal orientation, and peer support to examine their effects on work–study balance and its influence on academic performance. **Method:** A quantitative correlational design was employed with 300 working university students from BELTEI International University. Data were analyzed using SPSS and SmartPLS. **Results:** The structural model demonstrated moderate explanatory power, explaining 49.0% of the variance in work–study balance and 61.5% of the variance in academic performance. Goal orientation was the strongest predictor of work–study balance, followed by time management and peer support, while self-regulation showed no significant effect. Academic performance was significantly predicted by self-regulation, goal orientation, peer support, and work–study balance, whereas time management did not show a significant effect. **Conclusion:** These findings emphasize the importance of personal and social factors in promoting students' academic success and provide practical implications for policymakers and universities, while future research should validate the proposed model across diverse educational and cultural contexts. **Contribution:** These findings contribute empirical evidence from the Cambodian higher education context by addressing the determinants of work–study balance and academic performance within an integrated framework.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Academic progression in higher education reflects more than the completion of ordinary milestones; it requires students to develop self-reliance in managing multiple responsibilities (Lei et al., 2020). For students combining academic pursuits with part-time or full-time employment, these dual responsibilities can place substantial demands on their time, energy, and capacity to perform effectively (Kanu et al., 2025; Orbilla & Paglinawan, 2025). This work–study arrangement is evident across different higher education contexts, demonstrating the widespread need for students to manage academic responsibilities alongside employment. In the United States, 81% of part-time and 43% of full-time students at public institutions were employed in 2017 (El Dine & Kaoud, 2023). Similarly, the EUROSTUDENT project reported that 69% of students across the European Higher Education Area engaged in paid work (Pološki Vokić et al., 2021). In Cambodia, 65.2% of surveyed university students were employed while pursuing full-time degree programmes (Gbadamosi et al., 2019). These findings indicate that combining employment with higher education is a relevant experience across different contexts, including Cambodia.

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Working while studying can provide students with valuable benefits beyond financial returns. For instance, [Remenick & Bergman \(2020\)](#) found that students who work during their academic progression can develop professionally, build stronger social networks, improve workplace relationships, and strengthen learning through the integration of theory and practice. These benefits suggest that employment can complement students' academic development by providing opportunities to apply knowledge, develop practical skills, and gain workplace experience. However, students may work while studying for different reasons, including financial pressures, personal ambitions, and family responsibilities ([Orbilla & Paglinawan, 2025](#)). Managing employment alongside academic responsibilities can therefore become challenging. Students may experience physical and mental exhaustion, academic difficulties, high levels of responsibility, and ineffective time management. These challenges highlight the importance of understanding how students manage competing work and academic demands.

Given these challenges, numerous empirical studies have identified factors that may help students manage work and study demands and maintain academic performance ([Pološki et al., 2021](#); [Schippers et al., 2020](#); [Lase & Wibowo, 2024](#); [Afandi et al., 2022](#)). These factors may be categorized into personal regulation factors, namely time management, self-regulation, and goal orientation, and a social support factor, namely peer support. Time management enables students to organize competing demands, while self-regulation and goal orientation support the regulation and direction of their academic efforts ([Pološki et al., 2021](#); [Afandi et al., 2022](#); [Schippers et al., 2020](#)). Peer support provides relational resources that may help students manage academic and work-related demands ([Lase & Wibowo, 2024](#)). Collectively, these mechanisms suggest that students' ability to allocate work and study requirements depends not only on their personal capacity to regulate and monitor their efforts but also on the support available within their social environment.

Although previous studies have examined factors associated with students' work-study balance and academic performance, many have focused on individual predictors rather than examining personal regulation and social support within an integrated framework. From a theoretical perspective, Self-Regulated Learning Theory highlights how students' personal regulation of their learning activities, including time management, self-regulation, and goal orientation, can shape their ability to manage competing academic and work demands. Social Support Theory emphasizes the role of interpersonal resources, such as peer support, in helping individuals cope with demands and maintain their functioning. Examining these personal and social resources simultaneously can therefore provide a more comprehensive understanding of students' work-study balance and academic performance. In addition, empirical evidence from developing contexts, particularly Cambodia, remains limited.

This study addresses these theoretical and contextual gaps by examining the effects of time management, self-regulation, goal orientation, and peer support on students' work-study balance and academic performance, as well as the contribution of work-study balance to academic performance. Therefore, this study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1. How do time management, self-regulation, goal orientation, and peer support influence students' work-study balance?

RQ2. How do time management, self-regulation, goal orientation, peer support, and work-study balance influence students' academic performance?

Additionally, the purpose of this study is to examine how personal regulation factors, namely time management, self-regulation, and goal orientation, and social support, namely peer support, influence students' work-study balance and academic performance. The study also examines whether work-study balance contributes to academic performance. By integrating perspectives from Self-Regulated Learning Theory and Social Support Theory, this study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how personal and social resources are associated with students' ability to manage work and study demands and maintain academic performance in the Cambodian higher education context.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative correlational design to examine the relationships between the proposed factors, work–study balance, and academic performance among Cambodian university students. The study was motivated by the increasing prevalence of students who combine employment with university education, creating challenges in balancing academic responsibilities and work commitments. Understanding the factors associated with work–study balance and academic performance is therefore important for identifying areas where universities and relevant stakeholders can provide appropriate support. A quantitative approach was adopted to systematically measure the study constructs and test the proposed hypotheses, while the correlational design enabled the examina-

tion of relationships without manipulating the variables. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using PLS-SEM to assess the measurement and structural models. This approach aligned with the research objectives by providing empirical evidence to inform potential strategies for supporting working students' academic experiences and performance.

2.2 Sample and Sampling Design

An unknown population was assumed for sample size determination in this study. Data were collected from work-study students across four faculties, namely Business Administration, Finance and Banking, Law, and Information Technology, at BELTEI International University (Campus 1 and Campus 2). As suggested by Bowerman et al. (2019), the sample size was computed using the formula $n = p(1-p)(Z_{\alpha/2} \div B)^2$, resulting in a required minimum of 196 participants. In this formula, n represents the sample size, p is the estimated proportion (0.5), $Z_{\alpha/2}$ denotes the standard normal deviate at a 95% confidence level (1.96), and B represents the tolerance error (0.07). A total of 300 respondents were selected, exceeding the minimum requirement to provide a larger and more robust dataset for the planned PLS-SEM analysis and to account for potentially incomplete or unusable responses.

Therefore, these respondents were selected using convenience sampling from four faculties at Toul Sleng (Campus 1) and Chom Chao Flyover (Campus 2) of BELTEI International University, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, due to the accessibility of eligible working students. The study included undergraduate and postgraduate students who simultaneously balanced work and study responsibilities, ensuring that participants had relevant experience to provide informed responses. Although the sample size was adequate for statistical analysis, the non-random sampling approach limits representativeness. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted within this specific context and should not be generalized to the broader student population.

2.3 Research Instruments

According to Table 1, the structured questionnaire comprised demographic items and measurement items adapted from prior studies and modified to fit the study context. The instrument was translated into Khmer and back-translated into English by two bilingual colleagues, with minor revisions made after pilot testing to improve clarity. A bilingual Khmer-English questionnaire was used for data collection, with responses measured on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Mean scores were interpreted as strongly disagree (1.00–1.79), disagree (1.81–2.59), moderate (2.60–3.39), agree (3.40–4.19), and strongly agree (4.20–5.00) (Koo & Yang, 2025).

Table 1. A Summary of the Construct Measurement

Constructs	No. of Items	Sources
Time Management	TM1–TM6	Bangquiao et al. (2023); Galaviz et al. (2025)
Self-regulation	SR1–SR5	Ito and Umemoto (2022); Mawardah and Kalsyum (2023)
Goal Orientation	GO1–GO5	Remedios et al. (2002); Frumos et al. (2024)
Peer Support	PS1–PS6	Parmar et al. (2025); Binasari and Tentama (2025)
Work-Study Balance	WSB1–WSB7	Tecson et al. (2025); Beatson et al. (2021)
Academic Performance	AP1–AP5	Tecson et al. (2025); Fu et al. (2025)

2.4 Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected in two stages from undergraduate and postgraduate work–study students across four faculties at two campuses. First, a pilot study involving 111 respondents was conducted from May 31 to June 5, 2026, to assess the instrument’s preliminary validity and reliability. These responses were excluded from the main study. Second, the main survey was conducted from June 7 to July 10, 2026, yielding 300 valid responses. Data were collected through Google Forms distributed via Telegram and in person during scheduled class visits. Prior permission was obtained from faculty vice deans and course lecturers. During data collection, participants were briefed on the study’s purpose and allocated approximately 10–15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, and confidentiality and anonymity were ensured. The pilot data were used for preliminary measurement assessment, while the main data were analyzed using PLS-SEM to evaluate the measurement and structural models and test the proposed hypotheses.

2.5 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel 2015, IBM SPSS Statistics 27, and SmartPLS 3, with Excel used for data coding, screening, and cleaning, and SPSS used for descriptive statistics, validity, and reliability analysis. Preliminary validity was assessed using the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO ≥ 0.60) measure and Bartlett’s test of sphericity ($p < 0.05$), followed by factor analysis using principal component analysis with varimax rotation (Groth et al., 2013). Factors were retained based on eigenvalues > 1.0 , cumulative variance $\geq 60\%$, and factor loadings ≥ 0.60 , while reliability was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha ≥ 0.60 (Hair et al., 2022). SmartPLS 3 was used to test the measurement and structural models through PLS-SEM and test the proposed hypotheses using the recommended assessment criteria (Hair et al., 2022).

The proposed research model was subsequently analyzed using PLS-SEM in SmartPLS, following the two-stage approach recommended by Hair et al. (2022). The measurement model was assessed for indicator reliability (outer loadings ≥ 0.70), internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha, composite reliability, and rho_A ≥ 0.70), convergent validity (AVE ≥ 0.50), and discriminant validity using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and HTMT. Discriminant validity was supported when $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$ exceeded interconstruct correlations and HTMT values were below 0.85, with values below 0.90 considered acceptable (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Henseler et al., 2015; Hair et al., 2022). The structural model was evaluated using variance inflation factors (VIF < 5.00), coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and path coefficients (β). Hypotheses were tested using bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples (Hair et al., 2022). The evaluation criteria for the PLS-SEM analysis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Evaluation criteria for PLS-SEM analysis

Model Assessments	Criteria	Sources
Outer loading	≥ 0.70	Hair et al. (2022)
α	≥ 0.70	Hair et al. (2022)
CR	≥ 0.70	Hair et al. (2022)
AVE	≥ 0.50	Hair et al. (2022)
VIF	< 3.30	Hair et al. (2022)
β	t-value > 1.96 and p-value < 0.05	Hair et al. (2022)
R^2	0.25 = weak, 0.50 = moderate, and 0.75 = substantial	Hair et al. (2022)
f^2	0.02 = small, 0.15 = medium, and 0.35 = large	Hair et al. (2022)
Q^2	$Q^2 > 0$	Hair et al. (2022)
Bootstrapping	5,000 subsamples	Hair et al. (2022)

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

The findings are presented in several sections, beginning with respondents’ demographic characteristics and descriptive statistics, followed by a preliminary validity and reliability assessment. The measurement model is then examined using PLS-SEM through indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Finally, the structural model is assessed for collinearity, common method bias, R^2 , f^2 , Q^2 , and hypothesis testing using bootstrapping.

3.1.1. Respondent Demographics

Table 3 presents the demographic characteristics of the 300 respondents. The sample was predominantly female and aged 21–23 years. Most respondents were bachelor’s degree students enrolled in the Faculty of Business Administration. Regarding employment, the majority worked full-time, while most reported a monthly personal income within the lower income ranges.

Table 3. Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Demographic	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	71	23.7
	Female	229	76.3
Age	18–20 years	86	28.7
	21–23 years	169	56.3
	24–26 years	34	11.3
	Above 26 years	11	3.7

Demographic	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Educational Levels	Bachelor's degree	254	84.7
	Master's degree	46	15.3
Major	Faculty of Business Administration	197	65.7
	Faculty of Finance and Banking	86	28.7
	Faculty of Information Technology	14	4.7
	Faculty of Law	3	1.0
Employment Status	Part-time employed	40	13.3
	Full-time employed	230	76.7
	Self-employed/Freelance	30	10.0
Personal Income	USD 100–200	80	26.7
	USD 201–300	121	40.3
	USD 301–400	56	18.7
	More than USD 400	43	14.3

3.1.2. Descriptive Statistics

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for the study constructs. Overall, the respondents demonstrated a positive perception of all constructs, with mean scores indicating a general level of agreement. Among the constructs, GO exhibited the highest mean score, whereas PS recorded the lowest. The remaining constructs, including TM, SR, WSB, and AP, also reflected favorable responses, suggesting that respondents generally agreed with the statements measuring each construct.

Table 4. Results of descriptive statistics

Constructs	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation	Level of Agreement
TM	1.00	5.00	3.783	0.587	Agree
SR	1.00	5.00	3.919	0.690	Agree
GO	1.00	5.00	3.966	0.683	Agree
PS	1.00	5.00	3.750	0.763	Agree
WSB	1.00	5.00	3.874	0.604	Agree
AP	1.00	5.00	3.867	0.722	Agree

3.1.3. Validity Analysis

Preliminary validity analysis was conducted using a separate pilot dataset ($n = 111$) to assess the factor structure and refine the measurement items. Given the exploratory purpose and relatively small sample, the results were used primarily for item screening rather than as definitive evidence of construct validity. Item retention and removal were based on both statistical evidence and theoretical considerations. Accordingly, three items from TM, three from SWSB, and two items each from SR, GO, PS, and AP were removed due to weak factor loadings (< 0.60), cross-loadings (> 0.40), or limited contribution to the factor structure. These criteria were applied to remove items that showed insufficient representation of their intended constructs and to improve the clarity and distinctiveness of the measurement model. The remaining items met the established criteria, with factor loadings above 0.60, eigenvalues above 1.00, and cumulative variance exceeding 60%. Refined items were retained for the main study and evaluated using the PLS SEM measurement model, with factor loadings presented in descending order in Table 5.

Table 5. Validity analysis results

Constructs		Factor Analysis			
		FL	KMO	E	Cu%
Time Management (TM)					
TM1	I organize my work and study activities in advance.	0.823	0.666	1.882	62.73
TM2	I prioritize my academic and work tasks based on their importance.	0.565			
TM3	I use available free time effectively to complete academic or work-related tasks.	0.774			
TM4	I set deadlines for completing my academic and work-related tasks.	0.589			
TM5	I divide my time appropriately between academic and work responsibilities.	0.577			

Constructs		Factor Analysis			
		FL	KMO	E	Cu%
TM6	I follow a regular schedule to manage my academic and work responsibilities.	0.778			
Self-regulation (SR)					
SR1	I make academic or group tasks more interesting to maintain my motivation while balancing work and study.	0.801	0.765	2.365	60.00
SR2	I set personal disciplines to stay motivated when managing both work and academic responsibilities.	0.715			
SR3	I change the way I think about difficult academic tasks to remain motivated when balancing work and study.	0.513			
SR4	I control distractions to stay focused on academic tasks while managing work and study responsibilities.	0.598			
SR5	I continue working on academic tasks even when I feel unmotivated due to work–study pressures.	0.767			
Goal Orientation (GO)					
GO1	I focus on improving my academic performance while balancing work and study responsibilities.	0.814	0.680	1.947	64.89
GO2	I strive to develop my skills and knowledge through both academic and work experiences.	0.498			
GO3	I stay committed to my academic goals even when work–study pressures make learning difficult.	0.782			
GO4	I try to avoid missing important learning by balancing study and work.	0.565			
GO5	I persist in my current situation despite the demands of balancing work and study.	0.821			
Peer Support (PS)					
PS1	My peers help me understand study content while balancing work and study.	0.806	0.781	2.575	64.37
PS2	My peers assist me in completing assignments and academic tasks while I manage work and study.	0.506			
PS3	I discuss course materials with peers to enhance my understanding in my work–study life.	0.788			
PS4	I rely on my peers when I face difficulties in balancing work and study.	0.598			
PS5	My peers encourage me to stay engaged in my studies while balancing work.	0.803			
PS6	My peers share useful advice that helps me manage study and work demands.	0.812			
Work-study Balance (WSB)					
WSB1	I can effectively manage both my work and study responsibilities.	0.751	0.765	2.494	62.36
WSB2	I can manage my time efficiently while balancing work and study commitments.	0.712			
WSB3	I can maintain a healthy balance between my academic and work responsibilities.	0.563			
WSB4	I can apply knowledge from my studies to my work while balancing work and study.	0.555			
WSB5	Balancing work and study helps me gain valuable work experience.	0.468			
WSB6	I can stay focused on my academic responsibilities despite the demands of work.	0.852			
WSB7	I can balance work and study in a way that supports my future career development.	0.835			
Academic Performance (AP)					
AP1	I perform well in my studies while balancing work and study.	0.846	0.624	1.986	66.21
AP2	I complete my coursework on time while balancing work and study.	0.883			
AP3	I find it easy to stay engaged and interested in my courses while balancing work and study.	0.546			
AP4	I can manage my academic course load effectively while balancing work and study.	0.551			
AP5	I make consistent efforts to understand course materials despite balancing work and study commitments.	0.701			

3.1.4. Reliability Analysis

Table 6 presents the reliability results, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.637 to 0.815. PS showed the highest reliability ($\alpha = 0.815$), while SR had the lowest ($\alpha = 0.637$), which remains acceptable for exploratory research. Overall, all constructs demonstrated adequate internal consistency for subsequent analysis.

Table 6: Reliability analysis of measurement items (n = 111)

Nº	Constructs	Items	Cronbach's α	Reliability Level	AIIC
1	TM	3	0.703	Questionable	0.440
2	SR	3	0.637	Questionable	0.369
3	GO	3	0.729	Acceptable	0.473
4	PS	4	0.815	Good	0.525
5	WSB	4	0.794	Acceptable	0.491
6	AP	3	0.740	Acceptable	0.487

Note. Cronbach's α : excellent (> 0.90); good (0.80–0.89); acceptable (0.70–0.79); questionable (0.60–0.69); poor (0.50–0.59); and unacceptable (< 0.50); AIIC: $0.30 \leq \text{AIIC} \leq 0.70$.

3.1.5. Measurement Model Assessment

Table 7 presents the measurement model assessment. Three indicators, TM6 (0.307), WSB1 (0.408), and WSB2 (0.385), were removed because their outer loadings were below the recommended threshold of 0.70, which could weaken indicator reliability and convergent validity. After purification, the retained indicators showed satisfactory loadings ranging from 0.749 to 0.929. Internal consistency was generally acceptable, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.645 to 0.850, rho_A from 0.650 to 0.851, and composite reliability from 0.839 to 0.921. Although TM showed slightly lower alpha (0.645) and rho_A (0.650), it was retained based on its strong composite reliability (0.849), indicator loadings (0.842–0.875), and AVE (0.737), consistent with [Hair et al. \(2022\)](#), who recommend considering multiple reliability measures in PLS-SEM. All constructs achieved satisfactory convergent validity, with AVE values ranging from 0.636 to 0.854. Overall, the measurement model demonstrated adequate reliability and convergent validity for assessing the structural model.

Table 7. Measurement model assessment

Constructs	Items	Outer Loadings	Cronbach's α	rho_A	CR	AVE
TM	TM1	0.842	0.645	0.650	0.849	0.737
	TM3	0.875				
SR	SR1	0.817	0.713	0.717	0.839	0.636
	SR2	0.823				
	SR5	0.749				
GO	GO1	0.84	0.769	0.772	0.866	0.683
	GO3	0.823				
	GO5	0.817				
PS	PS1	0.810	0.850	0.851	0.899	0.689
	PS3	0.839				
	PS5	0.842				
	PS6	0.829				
WSB	WSB6	0.918	0.829	0.832	0.921	0.854
	WSB7	0.929				
AP	AP1	0.858	0.779	0.785	0.872	0.694
	AP2	0.856				
	AP5	0.782				

3.1.6 Discriminant Validity and Correlation Analysis

Table 8 shows that the square root of AVE for each construct exceeded its correlations with the other constructs, supporting satisfactory discriminant validity. The inter-construct correlations ranged from 0.540 to 0.700 and remained below the corresponding square root of AVE ($\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$) values. Thus, the constructs demonstrated adequate empirical distinctiveness for subsequent structural model assessment.

Table 8. Fornell–Larcker criterion for discriminant validity

Construct	AP	GO	PS	SR	TM	WSB
AP	0.833					
GO	0.664	0.827				
PS	0.658	0.609	0.830			
SR	0.700	0.695	0.650	0.797		
TM	0.558	0.596	0.567	0.610	0.859	
WSB	0.618	0.663	0.547	0.553	0.540	0.924

Note. Bold diagonal values are $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$; off-diagonal values are construct correlations.

Additionally, the Heterotrait Monotrait ratio (HTMT) was used to further assess discriminant validity. As shown in Table 9, all HTMT values ranged from 0.649 to 0.867, below the recommended threshold of 0.90. These results provide additional evidence that the constructs demonstrate satisfactory discriminant validity, as presented in Table 9.

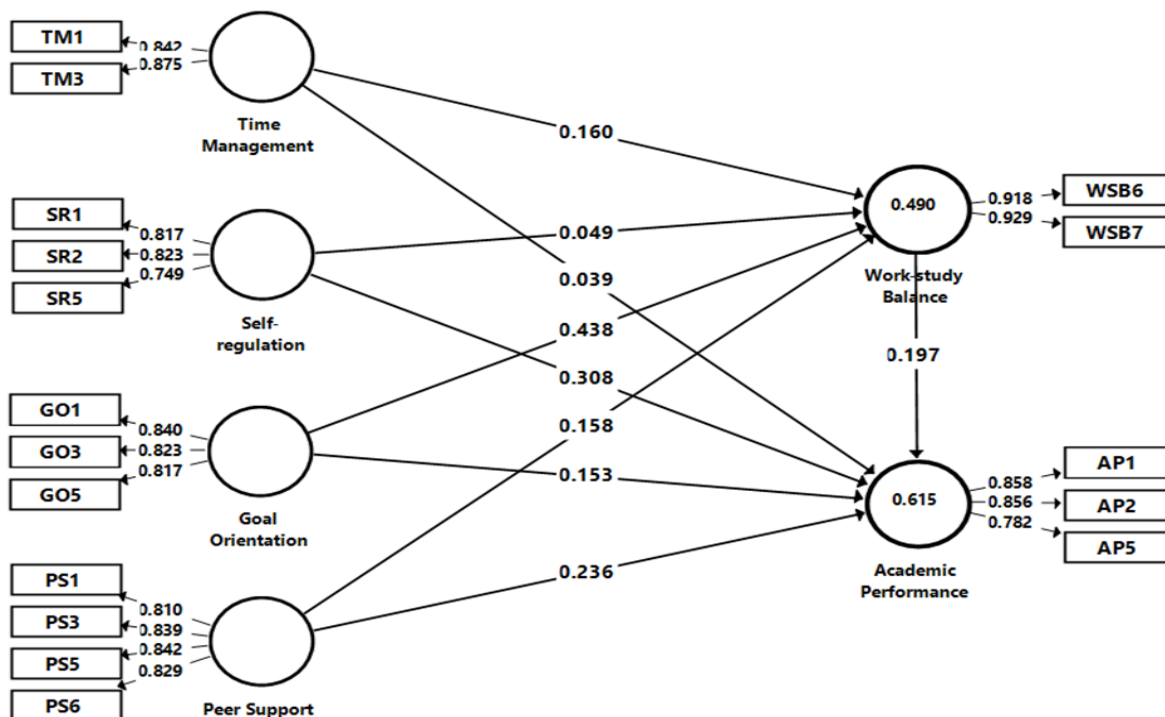
Table 9. HTMT ratio results

Construct	AP	GO	PS	SR	TM	WSB
AP	—					
GO	0.855	—				
PS	0.807	0.753	—			
SR	0.845	0.839	0.833	—		
TM	0.781	0.840	0.765	0.867	—	
WSB	0.766	0.824	0.649	0.718	0.739	—

Note. HTMT values below 0.90 indicate satisfactory discriminant validity

3.1.7 Structural Model Assessment

Figure 3 presents the PLS structural model estimated in SmartPLS, illustrating the hypothesized relationships, standardized path coefficients (β), and R^2 values. Model quality was assessed using collinearity, R^2 , f^2 , Q^2 , and bootstrapping to test the significance of the proposed relationships. The results are presented in the following sections.

**Figure 3.** Structural model estimated using the PLS algorithm

3.1.8. Collinearity and Common Method Bias Assessment

Table 10 presents the collinearity and common method bias assessment. Indicator VIF values ranged from 1.293 to 2.063, below the recommended threshold of 3.30, indicating no problematic collinearity among the indicators. Full collinearity VIF values ranged from 1.000 to 2.612, also below 3.30, suggesting that common method bias was unlikely to substantially affect the results.

Table 10. Collinearity and common method bias assessment

Construct	Indicator VIF Range	Full Collinearity VIF	Assessment
AP	1.293–2.063	1.961	No CMB
GO	1.293–2.063	2.612	No CMB
PS	1.293–2.063	2.029	No CMB
SR	1.293–2.063	2.448	No CMB
TM	1.293–2.063	1.888	No CMB
WSB	1.293–2.063	1.000	No CMB

Note. CMB = common method bias; VIF = variance inflation factor. VIF < 3.30 indicates no substantial collinearity or CMB.

3.1.9. Structural Model Quality Assessment

Table 11 presents the structural model assessment results. The model explained 49.0% of the variance in work–study balance (WSB) ($R^2 = 0.490$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.483$) and 61.5% of the variance in academic performance (AP) ($R^2 = 0.615$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.609$). The Q^2 values for WSB (0.404) and AP (0.408) were greater than zero, indicating adequate predictive relevance of the model. The f^2 analysis revealed that GO had a medium effect on WSB ($f^2 = 0.168$), whereas the remaining predictors demonstrated small or negligible effect sizes.

Table 11. Structural model quality assessment

Endogenous Construct	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Q^2	Predictor Construct	f^2	Effect Size
WSB	0.490	0.483	0.404	TM	0.027	Small
				SR	0.002	No effect
				GO	0.168	Medium
				PS	0.025	Small
AP	0.615	0.609	0.408	TM	0.002	No effect
				SR	0.100	Small
				GO	0.023	Small
				PS	0.071	Small
				WSB	0.051	Small

3.1.10. Hypothesis Testing

Table 12 presents the hypothesis testing results based on the bootstrapping procedure. The results show that TM, GO, and PS significantly and positively influenced WSB, whereas SR had no significant effect. For AP, SR, GO, PS, and WSB showed significant positive effects, while TM was not significant. Overall, seven of the nine proposed hypotheses were supported, indicating that most proposed relationships were statistically significant. Among the supported paths, GO had the strongest effect on WSB ($\beta = 0.438$), followed by SR on AP ($\beta = 0.308$) and PS on AP ($\beta = 0.236$).

Table 12. Results of hypothesis testing

Constructs	Hypothesis	Path Relationship	β	t-value	p-value	Results
TM	H1	TM → WSB	0.160	2.186	0.029	Supported
SR	H2	SR → WSB	0.049	0.530	0.596	Rejected
GO	H3	GO → WSB	0.438	6.495	0.000	Supported
PS	H4	PS → WSB	0.158	2.368	0.018	Supported
TM	H5	TM → AP	0.039	0.652	0.515	Rejected
SR	H6	SR → AP	0.308	3.602	0.000	Supported
GO	H7	GO → AP	0.153	2.296	0.022	Supported

PS	H8	PS → AP	0.236	4.127	0.000	Supported
WBS	H9	WSB → AP	0.197	2.557	0.011	Supported

Note. β=standardized path coefficient; path significance is as follows: *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, t-value > 1.96

3.2. Discussion

3.2.1. Literature Review

a) Working Students in Higher Education

Working students are higher education students who undertake paid employment while pursuing their academic studies, either on a part-time or full-time basis (Kanu et al., 2025). Combining employment with education can provide valuable benefits, including financial support, career development, professional experience, networking opportunities, and opportunities to apply academic knowledge in workplace settings (Remenick & Bergman, 2020; Chinyakata et al., 2019; Griffin, 2022). However, managing these two roles requires students to allocate limited time and energy across competing academic and employment responsibilities (El Dine & Kaoud, 2023). Work-study balance therefore refers to students’ ability to manage these competing demands while maintaining their academic responsibilities and functioning effectively in both domains (Griffin, 2022). Although working while studying can offer developmental and financial benefits, it can also create substantial challenges.

Previous research has associated the combination of work and study with stress, anxiety, fatigue, sleep disturbances, time constraints, and difficulties with concentration and academic performance (Balacuit & Lopio, 2022; Chiang et al., 2020; Bartolj & Polanec, 2021). These challenges indicate that maintaining work-study balance requires students to regulate their time, learning activities, and goals effectively while also drawing on available social resources. Thus, previous studies have identified time management, self-regulation, goal orientation, and peer support as factors that may help students manage competing demands and maintain academic functioning (Pološki Vokić et al., 2021; Schippers et al., 2020; Afandi et al., 2022; Lase & Wibowo, 2024). Personal regulation factors can help students organize responsibilities, regulate their efforts, and remain focused on academic goals, whereas peer support can provide encouragement, guidance, and practical assistance when students face competing demands.

In Cambodia, research on students who combine work and study remains limited. Chantrea et al. (2017) examined the experiences of 100 students at the University of Cambodia and identified both challenges and benefits associated with working while studying, while Moeurn et al. (2024) explored challenges among first-year university students through qualitative interviews. However, existing Cambodian research has not sufficiently examined how personal regulation and social support factors jointly contribute to work-study balance and academic performance. This leaves contextual and theoretical gaps in understanding how personal and social resources operate together among Cambodian higher education students. A methodological gap also remains, as limited research has applied partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) to examine these factors simultaneously and their relationships with work-study balance and academic performance in the Cambodian context. Therefore, the present study develops an integrated model incorporating time management, self-regulation, goal orientation, and peer support and uses PLS-SEM to examine their relationships with work-study balance and academic performance.

b) Theoretical Foundation

The current study is theoretically grounded in two major theoretical perspectives, Self-Regulated Learning Theory (SCT) (Zimmerman, 2002) and Social Support Theory (SST) (Cohen & Wills, 1985), to explain factors influencing students’ work-study balance and academic performance among Cambodian university students. SCT emphasizes individuals’ ability to monitor and regulate their behaviors, motivation, and cognitive processes toward specific goals, supporting the relevance of time management, self-regulation, and goal orientation as personal regulation factors that may help students manage competing academic and employment demands (Zimmerman, 2002). In contrast, SST emphasizes the role of interpersonal resources in helping individuals cope with demands through emotional, informational, and instrumental support, making peer support a relevant social resource for working students (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Overall, these perspectives collectively provide a theoretical foundation for examining how personal regulation and social support influence work-study balance and, subsequently, academic performance.

c). Hypothesis Development

Time Management and Work–Study Balance

Time management relates to the systematic skills, strategies, and practices used to allocate and organize time effectively to accomplish tasks and achieve personal goals, including balancing work and study (Sharma et al., 2025). Several studies indicate that time management plays an important role in improving students' ability to manage both academic and work demands in higher education (Bangquiao et al., 2023; Mohira, 2025; Galaviz et al., 2025; Fu et al., 2025). Effective time management practices, such as scheduling and prioritizing tasks, organizing academic responsibilities, breaking work into manageable parts, and enhancing self-control, help students reduce academic stress, improve performance, and manage dual work–study demands more effectively (Bangquiao et al., 2023; Mohira, 2025; Galaviz et al., 2025; Fu et al., 2025). Based on this evidence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Time management has a significant positive effect on students' work–study balance.

Self-regulation and Work–Study Balance

Self-regulation refers to individuals' ability to control and monitor emotions, thoughts, behaviors, and energy to maintain discipline and achieve educational and career goals in university settings (Khan et al., 2020). Numerous existing studies show that self-regulation positively enables students' work–study balance by improving goal setting, planning, motivation, emotional control, concentration, and sustained goal-directed behavior, which help students effectively manage academic and work responsibilities (Afandi et al., 2022; Ito & Umemoto, 2022; Schulte-Frankenfeld & Trautwein, 2022). Moreover, self-regulation enhances learning motivation, academic performance, task engagement, and the organization of responsibilities, thereby strengthening students' ability to maintain work–study balance in higher education (Mawardah & Kalsyum, 2023; Rahayu et al., 2024). Thus, this study postulates the following hypothesis:

H2: Self-regulation has a significant positive effect on students' work–study balance.

Goal Orientation and Work–Study Balance

According to Beik & Cho (2024), goal orientation is a stimulus factor that helps individuals concentrate on targeted directions and remain resilient in accomplishing their goals, including balancing work and study simultaneously. For instance, prior studies highlight that goal orientation positively contributes to students' work–study balance by strengthening academic planning, self-discipline, motivation, and resilience, while improving academic performance and psychological well-being (Schippers et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2022). Furthermore, goal orientation has been found to promote positive emotions, hope, academic achievement, and overall well-being, thereby enhancing students' ability to effectively manage work and study responsibilities in higher education (Frumos et al., 2024). Based on this evidence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Goal orientation has a significant positive effect on students' work–study balance.

Peer Support and Work–Study Balance

Peer support refers to a supportive strategy among higher education students that promotes academic engagement, strengthens social connections, and assists students in balancing work and study responsibilities (Parmar et al., 2025). Previous studies indicate that peer support significantly enhances students' work–study balance by enhancing academic success, psychological well-being, motivation, learning engagement, constructive feedback, and a sense of belonging, while helping students better manage academic and work-related challenges (Lase & Wibowo, 2024; Smith et al., 2024; Paik, 2024). Furthermore, peer support has been found to strengthen self-regulation, academic achievement, career development, workplace understanding, and responsibility, thereby improving students' ability to maintain work–study balance in higher education (Schimmelpfennig, 2025; Binasari & Tentama, 2025). Thus, this study postulates the following hypothesis:

H4: Peer support has a significant positive effect on students' work–study balance.

Time Management and Academic Performance

Time management refers to the ability to effectively plan, organize, and allocate available time to accomplish tasks within the expected timeframe while achieving desired outcomes (Galaviz et al., 2025). Effective time management enables students to prioritize academic responsibilities, complete tasks on time, and improve overall learning efficiency (Mariano et al., 2022; Mohira, 2025). Previous empirical studies have shown that effective time management significantly improves academic performance by helping students meet deadlines, manage study workloads, and enhance academic productivity (Galaviz et al., 2025; Mariano et al., 2022). Hence, this study postulates the following hypothesis:

H5: Time management has a significant positive effect on academic performance.

Self-regulation and Academic Performance

Self-regulation is an essential self-regulatory competency that enables students to remain focused, manage distractions, and persist in completing academic tasks (Azis & Clefoto, 2024). Joniqulov & Sobirova (2025) demonstrated that student self-regulation is a key determinant of academic performance, as disciplined students tend to develop stronger self-management, learning motivation, and academic behaviors that support improved educational outcomes. Previous empirical studies have consistently shown that self-regulation positively influences academic performance by enhancing students' learning engagement, persistence, diligence, and confidence in accomplishing academic responsibilities (Ma, 2022; Geng & Wei, 2023). Students with higher levels of self-regulation are more likely to achieve better academic outcomes through effective learning behaviors and sustained motivation. Hence, this study postulates the following hypothesis:

H6: Self-regulation has a significant positive effect on academic performance.

Goal Orientation and Academic Performance

Goal orientation is an effective motivational factor that influences students' learning behaviors, persistence, and academic performance (Alisofi et al., 2025). Previous empirical studies have shown that goal orientation positively affects academic performance by encouraging students to develop achievement motivation, regulate learning behaviors, maintain persistence, and adopt effective strategies to accomplish academic goals (Alasqah, 2022; Venkatesan & Prabu Shankar, 2022; Alisofi et al., 2025). Students with stronger goal orientations are more likely to demonstrate greater motivation, self-regulation, and commitment toward academic tasks, leading to improved academic outcomes (Alasqah, 2022; Alisofi et al., 2025). Hence, this study postulates the following hypothesis:

H7: Goal orientation has a significant positive effect on academic performance.

Peer Support and Academic Performance

Peer support plays an important role in enhancing students' academic success by providing social encouragement, motivation, and opportunities for collaborative learning (Lase & Wibowo, 2024). Previous empirical studies have demonstrated that peer support positively influences academic performance by strengthening learning engagement, achievement goals, emotional regulation, and positive learning behaviors (Nasir et al., 2025; Gai et al., 2026; Zhang & Kasa, 2026). Students who receive greater support from peers are more likely to remain motivated, actively participate in learning activities, and achieve better academic performance (Nasir et al., 2025; Gai et al., 2026; Zhang & Kasa, 2026). Hence, this study postulates the following hypothesis:

H8: Peer support has a significant positive effect on academic performance.

Students' Work–Study Balance and Academic Performance

Students' work–study balance plays an essential role in supporting students to successfully manage employment and academic responsibilities, contributing to a balanced academic life, career development, and improved academic achievement (Siem et al., 2025). For instance, prior empirical studies indicate that students' work–study balance has a significant influence on academic performance by helping students effectively manage study and personal time, prioritize urgent tasks, maintain emotional and physical well-being, and improve work and academic quality (Pološki Vokić et al., 2021; Suminguit et al., 2025). Furthermore, maintaining students' work–study balance has been found to strengthen self-care, self-confidence, motivation, timely task completion, flexible scheduling, and overall academic achievement, thereby improving students' academic performance and career development (Kanu et al., 2025; Patria et al., 2025). Hence, this study postulates the following hypothesis:

H9: Work–study balance has a significant positive effect on academic performance.

d) Conceptual Framework

Drawing on prior studies, this study proposes an integrated framework examining the effects of time management, self-regulation, goal orientation, and peer support on work–study balance and academic performance among Cambodian university students. These factors are categorized into personal regulation and social support domains, providing the basis for the hypotheses and structural model shown in Figure 1.

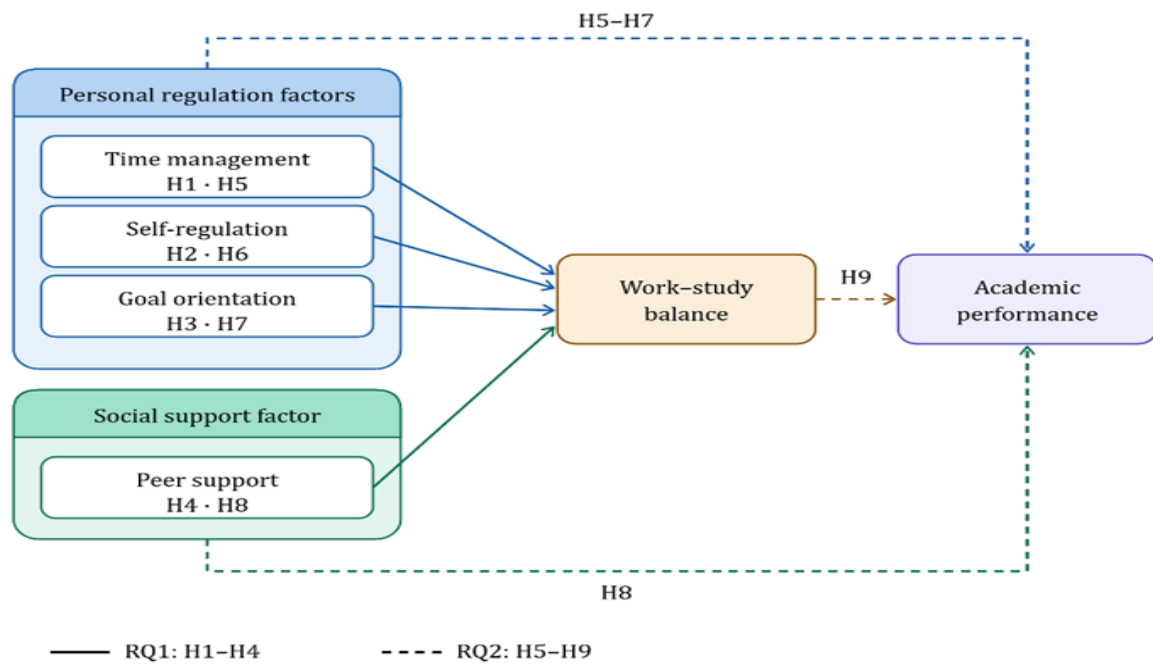


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

3.2.2 Time Management and Work–Study Balance

H1 was supported, as time management significantly and positively affected students' work–study balance ($\beta = 0.160$, $p = 0.029$). Students who effectively plan, prioritize, and organize their time are better able to coordinate academic and employment demands and reduce role conflicts. This finding aligns with Self-Regulated Learning Theory, which emphasizes planning and regulating personal resources to achieve goals under competing demands (Zimmerman, 2002), and with previous studies showing that time management helps students organize tasks, reduce stress, and manage work and study responsibilities (Bangquiao et al., 2023; Mohira, 2025; Galaviz et al., 2025; Fu et al., 2025). In Cambodia, effective time allocation is therefore an important personal regulation capability for maintaining work–study balance.

3.2.3 Self-Regulation and Work–Study Balance

H2 was not supported because self-regulation did not significantly affect work–study balance ($\beta = 0.049$, $p = 0.596$). Although self-regulation helps students manage their thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and learning activities, it may be insufficient to address external demands such as work schedules, financial responsibilities, family obligations, and university schedules. From the perspective of Self-Regulated Learning Theory, this suggests that self-regulation may be more relevant to academic activities than to coordinating work and study roles (Zimmerman, 2002). This finding contrasts with previous studies showing that self-regulation supports work–study balance (Afandi et al., 2022; Ito & Umemoto, 2022; Schulte-Frankenfeld & Trautwein, 2022). For Cambodian university students, the non-significant relationship may indicate that structural and situational demands related to employment and study can limit the influence of individual self-regulation on overall work–study balance.

3.2.4 Goal Orientation and Work–Study Balance

H3 was supported, with goal orientation significantly and positively affecting work–study balance ($\beta = 0.438$, $p < 0.001$). This finding suggests that students with clearer goals are better able to prioritize responsibilities, maintain motivation, and manage limited time across educational and employment demands. It aligns with Self-Regulated Learning Theory, which identifies goal setting as a key component of self-regulated behavior (Zimmerman, 2002), and supports previous research linking goal orientation with planning, motivation, persistence, resilience, and work–study management (Schippers et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2022; Frumos et al., 2024). In Cambodia, clear educational and career goals may help working students maintain academic priorities while meeting employment demands.

3.2.5 Peer Support and Work–Study Balance

H4 was supported because peer support significantly and positively affected work–study balance ($\beta = 0.158$, $p = 0.018$). This suggests that encouragement, information, assistance, and cooperation from peers provide resources for managing competing employment and study demands. The finding aligns with Social Support Theory, which emphasizes interpersonal resources for coping with demanding responsibilities (Cohen & Wills, 1985), and supports previous research linking peer support with academic engagement, motivation, well-being, belonging, and work–study management (Lase & Wibowo, 2024; Smith et al., 2024; Paik, 2024). For Cambodian university students, peer networks may therefore provide practical and emotional resources that compensate for limited time and help students remain connected to academic activities while working.

3.2.6 Time Management and Academic Performance

H5 was not supported because time management did not significantly affect academic performance ($\beta = 0.039$, $p = 0.515$). Although students may organize their schedules effectively, allocating time does not necessarily ensure productive study, deeper learning, or better academic outcomes. This suggests that time management may contribute more directly to coordinating work and study responsibilities than to academic performance. The finding contradicts prior studies reporting positive relationships between time management and academic performance (Mariano et al., 2022; Mohira, 2025; Galaviz et al., 2025). In the Cambodian context, working students may successfully schedule their responsibilities but still face fatigue, workload pressure, limited study quality, or other learning challenges, suggesting that time management alone may not be sufficient to improve academic performance.

3.2.7. Self-Regulation and Academic Performance

H6 was supported because self-regulation significantly and positively affected academic performance ($\beta = 0.308$, $p < 0.001$). Students who monitor their learning, control distractions, maintain effort, and adjust their learning behaviors are more likely to achieve better academic outcomes. This finding directly supports Self-Regulated Learning Theory, which emphasizes the regulation of cognition, motivation, and behavior toward academic goals (Zimmerman, 2002), and agrees with previous research linking self-regulation with engagement, persistence, motivation, and academic achievement (Ma, 2022; Geng & Wei, 2023; Jonikulov & Sobirova, 2025). The contrast between the significant effect on academic performance and the non-significant effect on work–study balance suggests that self-regulation may be more important for monitoring learning behaviors than for controlling external employment and life demands among Cambodian university students.

3.2.8 Goal Orientation and Academic Performance

H7 was supported because goal orientation significantly and positively affected academic performance ($\beta = 0.153$, $p = 0.022$). Students with clear achievement goals are more likely to maintain motivation, persist in challenging tasks, and direct their learning toward desired outcomes. This finding aligns with Self-Regulated Learning Theory, which emphasizes goal orientation as a basis for regulating learning efforts and behavior (Zimmerman, 2002), and aligns with previous studies linking goal orientation with achievement motivation, persistence, self-regulation, and effective learning strategies (Alasqah, 2022; Venkatesan & Prabu Shankar, 2022; Alisofi et al., 2025). For Cambodian university students who may have to divide their attention between employment and education, clear academic goals may help sustain commitment to learning and provide a meaningful basis for prioritizing academic achievement.

3.2.9 Peer Support and Academic Performance

H8 was supported because peer support significantly and positively affected academic performance ($\beta = 0.236$, $p < 0.001$). Students receiving peer support may benefit from shared knowledge, collaborative learning, encouragement, feedback, and emotional assistance. This finding supports Social Support Theory, which emphasizes informational, emotional, and practical resources for coping with demands (Cohen & Wills, 1985), and agrees with previous research linking peer support with engagement, achievement goals, positive learning behaviors, and academic outcomes (Lase & Wibowo, 2024; Nasir et al., 2025; Gai et al., 2026; Zhang & Kasa, 2026). In the Cambodian context, peer support may be particularly valuable for working students because peers can help compensate for missed learning opportunities and provide academic resources when employment limits students' time on campus.

3.2.10 Work–Study Balance and Academic Performance

H9 was supported because work–study balance significantly and positively affected academic performance ($\beta = 0.197$, $p = 0.011$). Students who better coordinate employment and academic responsibilities may be more able to maintain study routines, complete tasks, and participate effectively in learning activities. This finding aligns with the study's integrated theoretical framework, as effective regulation of competing responsibilities can support academic engagement. It also agrees with previous research showing that work–study balance improves academic performance by helping students organize responsibilities, manage time, maintain well-being, and complete academic tasks (Pološki Vokić et al., 2021; Suminguit et al., 2025; Kanu et al., 2025). For Cambodian university students, the significant relationship highlights that academic success cannot be considered independently of students' employment responsibilities and emphasizes the importance of creating conditions that allow students to manage both roles effectively.

4. IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

4.1 Research Implications

This study provides important theoretical and practical implications for understanding work–study balance and academic performance among university students. Theoretically, by integrating Self-Regulated Learning Theory and Social Support Theory, the findings demonstrate that students' work–study balance and academic performance are jointly influenced by personal and social factors rather than by a single determinant. The structural model explained a substantial proportion of the variance in both work–study balance and academic performance, indicating strong explanatory power. Among the predictors, goal orientation exerted the strongest influence on work–study balance, whereas self-regulation had the greatest effect on academic performance. The findings also have practical implications for policymakers, higher education institutions, and students.

Since many Cambodian university students balance employment with academic responsibilities, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) should strengthen financial assistance through expanded scholarships, student support funds, and affordable education loan schemes to reduce students' financial burden. Universities should provide continuous mentoring, academic advising, psychological counseling, and peer-support programs throughout students' academic journey. Scholarship policies should also be reviewed to better accommodate working students whose employment commitments require flexible class schedules. Furthermore, students should actively develop self-regulation skills, establish clear academic goals, seek support from peers and mentors, and effectively manage their work and study commitments to enhance both work–study balance and academic performance.

4.1 Research Contributions

This study contributes to the existing literature in several ways. First, it extends the limited body of work on work–study balance by providing empirical evidence from the Cambodian higher education context, where studies on this topic remain scarce. Second, the study integrates Self-Regulated Learning Theory and Social Support Theory into a single conceptual framework, offering a more comprehensive explanation of the factors influencing both work–study balance and academic performance among working university students. Third, the findings identify goal orientation as the strongest predictor of work–study balance and self-regulation as the most influential determinant of academic performance, thereby highlighting the relative importance of different personal and social factors. Finally, the non-significant relationships between self-regulation and work–study balance, and between time management and academic performance, suggest that these associations may be more complex than previously assumed. These findings provide new directions for future research to examine potential mediating or moderating mechanisms across different educational contexts.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

5.1 Research Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the sample consisted predominantly of female students, which may limit the generalizability of the findings across gender groups. Second, the study was conducted at a single private university in Cambodia; therefore, the results may not fully represent students from other universities or educational settings. Third, convenience sampling was employed due to accessibility and time constraints, which may reduce the representativeness of the sample. Fourth, the study relied solely on PLS-SEM to examine the proposed relationships, and alternative analytical approaches may provide additional insights. Fifth,

the literature review primarily covered studies published between 2020 and 2026, which may have excluded earlier relevant research on work–study balance and academic performance. Finally, the time management construct demonstrated relatively lower internal consistency, representing a measurement limitation of this study.

5.1 Recommendation for Future Research Directions

Future studies are encouraged to recruit more balanced samples across gender and include students from multiple public and private universities to improve the generalizability of the findings. Employing probability sampling techniques, such as stratified or simple random sampling, would further enhance sample representativeness. Researchers may also compare findings across different academic disciplines, year levels, or cultural contexts to determine whether the proposed relationships remain consistent. Methodologically, future research should validate the proposed model using alternative analytical techniques, such as covariance-based SEM, multigroup analysis, or longitudinal designs to examine causal relationships over time. Future studies may also incorporate additional variables, such as financial stress, family support, resilience, mental health, or academic engagement, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing work–study balance and academic performance among university students.

6. CONCLUSION

This study examined factors influencing work–study balance and academic performance among Cambodian university students, drawing on Self-Regulated Learning Theory and Social Support Theory. Seven of the nine proposed hypotheses were supported. Time management, goal orientation, and peer support significantly improved work–study balance, while self-regulation did not. For academic performance, self-regulation, goal orientation, peer support, and work–study balance had significant positive effects, whereas time management had no significant direct effect. Goal orientation was the strongest predictor of work–study balance, while self-regulation had the strongest influence on academic performance. Overall, the findings indicate that both personal and social factors shape students' work–study balance and academic performance. The study contributes empirical evidence from Cambodia by applying Self-Regulated Learning Theory and Social Support Theory in the higher education context. However, its focus on a single private university limits generalizability, highlighting the need for future research across different universities and educational contexts.

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Author Contribution Statement

The author was solely responsible for all aspects of this research, including conceptualization, methodology, data collection, formal analysis, data curation, validation, manuscript preparation, revision, and final approval of the manuscript.

Declaration of Generative AI (GenAI) Usage in Scientific Writing

The authors used Grammarly for language clarity and proofreading during manuscript preparation. Generative AI tools were used for discussion and clarification of PLS-SEM formulas, statistical analysis procedures, and methodological concepts. The authors independently conducted the research, made all research and analytical decisions, verified the analyses, interpreted the findings, and took full responsibility for the content and conclusions of the manuscript. All instances of Generative AI usage in this article were conducted by the authors in accordance with the [IJGCS GenAI Tool Usage Policy](#), with the authors assuming full responsibility for the originality, accuracy, and integrity of the work.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares that they have no conflict of interest related to the research, authorship, or publication of this manuscript

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