# Career Self-Efficacy and Future Career Anxiety on Indonesian Fresh Graduates During Pandemic

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## Recommended Citation

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**Abstract**
The uncertain job vacancy presents substantial influence on job seekers during the Covid-19 pandemic. The anxiety concerning their future career emerges as a new and deteriorating issue for fresh graduates. On the other hand, self-efficacy serves as a crucial element in facing a shift in the situation. The self-efficacy being adopted in overcoming career anxiety is known as career self-efficacy. Therefore, this study aims to identify the correlation between career self-efficacy and future career anxiety in Indonesian fresh graduate. This study used a quantitative method with a correlational study approach. For the research sample, the final-year students participated in this study and were selected using random sampling. The data were collected through Career Self-Efficacy and Future Career Anxiety instruments and analyzed using data product moment analysis. Our results suggested a negative correlation between career self-efficacy and future career anxiety. Therefore, someone with higher self-efficacy presents a low rate of future career anxiety.

## 1. Introduction

On 11th March 2020, WHO declared the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic, which forces people to live alongside this rapidly spreading virus. Up to November 2021, WHO reported that COVID-19 had infected more than 265 million people worldwide. At the commencement of the pandemic, Indonesia presented minimum concern regarding the virus, with most of the citizens believing that COVID-19 would never infect Indonesian people. However, until recently, the Indonesian Ministry of Health has acknowledged the COVID-19 pandemic as a tragedy that required people to be vigilant.

The COVID-19 pandemic carries extensive effects on various sectors, including the health, education, economy, and employment fields. Additionally, a number of psychological problems have also been observed during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as stress, anxiety, depression, psychological trauma, and even self-harm behavior and suicide (Kaligis, Indraswari, & Ismail, 2020). In the economic field, the fear of COVID-19 also directly affects the employment sector. Accordingly, anxiety related to future career advancement also induces depression and uneasiness in employees and job seekers (Mahmud, Talukder, & Rahman, 2021). Besides, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecasted that the world would face an economic depression, which may be more severe than the economic depression in the 1930s, resulting in an uncertain economic situation (Altig et al., 2020).

In Indonesia, the Central Bureau of Statistics also reports a decrease in job openings. In January 2020, the number of job vacancies was 12,168, which continuously decreased to 11,103 in March, 6,134 in April, and 3,726 on May 2020 (Zwagery, 2021). This situation directly impacts job seekers, particularly those at productive ages and early adulthood who have just completed their education. These young adults experience anxiety, uncertainty, and restlessness in their future careers post-pandemic (Parola, 2020).

The composition of our workforce in February 2021 consisted of 131.06 million working population and 8.75 million unemployed. In comparison to before the pandemic, in February 2020, the workforce declined by 0.41 million people. The number of working residents decreased by 2.23 million people, and unemployment raised by 1.82 million people (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2021). A previous study reported that unemployed people experienced relatively high depression, stress, and anxiety (Mojtahedi et al., 2021).

The increasing occurrence of people losing their jobs, a decrease in wages, and high work pressures induce career anxiety for new graduates. Consequently, many fresh graduates experience depression and frustration, with several of them capable of regulating them (Mahfuzur & Khan, 2020). According to Thai (2014), the indicators of career anxiety are the fear of a future career, nervous if being asked for a career plan, indecisive about elements related to a career, the stress in contemplating and constructing a competitive resume, fear of commitment on a career, feeling incapable of getting a job, and fear of getting disappointed with their career choice.

The high cases of career anxiety get worse during the pandemic, aggravating individual psychological issues related to their career preparation. Thus, this issue requires severe attention. One of the alternatives for this issue is identifying an individual's skills in handling their anxiety problems. Research uncovered that low self-efficacy is the central issue in the decision-making and career-planning process (Ivana, 2017). Another study suggested that self-efficacy carries a role as someone's career decision-making predictor (Putri & Salim, 2020). During COVID-19, career self-efficacy is essential to be further investigated. Career self-efficacy is a robust predictor for numerous behavior related to career development, such as in finding jobs (da Motta Veiga & Turban, 2018; Niles & Sowa, 1992). Besides, career self-efficacy is also reported as a significant predictor for individual capacity and willingness to continuously find a job (Nesdale & Pinter, 2000).

Similarly, during COVID-19, a previous study discovered that fresh graduate encounter high (43.4%) and moderate (43.3%) career anxiety in facing the working world, signifying greater career anxiety during COVID-19 (Zwagery, 2021). This finding also indicates the need for scientific analysis of the correlation between someone's belief in their future career (career self-efficacy/CSA) with their future career anxiety (FCA). This analysis can be the foundational theory for the connection between those variables that guide the construction of alternative interventions and solutions for fresh graduate career problems during the pandemic.

In addition, career planning enhances someone's self-efficacy in their career decision-making process (Izzawati & Lisnawati, 2015). Furthermore, almost every level of society's economy has suffered as a result of the epidemic, including the availability of job openings and career paths following the qualification of fresh graduates.

This study aims to identify the correlation between career self-efficacy with career anxiety among fresh graduates. The results of this study were expected to be fundamental for fresh graduates' career determination or planning and as a guidance and counseling alternative for final-year students or college students before their subsequent life phases.

## 2. Method

This study used the quantitative method with a correlational design. A study using correlational design involves data collection to identify the level of correlation between two or more variables (Santoso & Madiistriyatno, 2021). A correlational study is research that investigates the connection of two or more variables and their level of correlation. In this study, we evaluated the scores of independent and dependent variables using the correlational statistic method. The degree of connection between those variables can be observed in the coefficient correlation estimation (Noor, 2016).

The sample is a smaller group from the population participating in our research, while the population is a group identified as people willing to get involved in the study (Wilson & Joye, 2016). Our sample was final-year college students who were currently working on their thesis or other final

assignments and fresh graduates with a diploma to master's degree who graduated in 2020 to 2022. These samples were collected using a random sampling technique.

In this study, the population was not determined, so we used the subject minimum calculation method that was ten times from the research item indicators (Hair Jr., Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2017). We used 20 research items, so we needed at least 200 respondents. Therefore, 304 fresh graduates aged 18 to 30 years old who were still working on their graduate and post-graduate thesis, doctoral dissertation, or other final project participated in this study, along with fresh graduates who graduated between 2020 to 2022. For the instrument, we used an adapted research instrument. An adapted instrument is a translated instrument which had been tested for similarity of meaning and accuracy of the translation  (Supratiknya, 2019).

Our participants filled out two scales, namely career self-efficacy and future career anxiety scales. The career self-efficacy scale consisted of 20 items with alpha (α) 0.8 reliability (Nasta, 2007). Meanwhile, future career anxiety subsisted five items with a reliability score of  (α) 0.88 (Mahmud et al., 2021). Before we conducted a correlation test, a normality test on the obtained data was carried out. The normality test was conducted using the skewness and kurtosis assumption test. Further, the obtained data were analyzed using inferential statistic parametric analysis using the Pearson correlational test (Sugiyono, 2016) using SPSS version 23.

## 3. Results

From our data we obtained demographic data from 304 respondents, as listed in Table 1. According to that data, the total number of our respondents was 304, with the highest number of respondents working on final assignments (56%), followed by people with an undergraduate degree (31%). Additionally, 94% of our respondents were unmarried, while 6% of them were married. From the employment status, 78% of our respondents had not had a job, while 22% of our respondents had been employed. From the presented data, the majority of respondents were working on final assignments, unmarried, and did not work.

**Table 1. Demography Data of Research Respondents**

| Variable | Attribute | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Current Education Level | Final-year students (who are working on final assignments and are about to graduate) | 170 | 56 |
| | Bachelor degree | 95 | 31 |
| | Graduate degree | 27 | 9 |
| | Diploma | 12 | 4 |
| Marriage Status | Unmarried | 285 | 94 |
| | Married | 19 | 6 |
| Employment Status | Unemployed | 237 | 78 |
| | Employed | 67 | 22 |

The data with a yellow highlight (item 11) in Table 2 attains the highest frequency in supporting career self-efficacy. The item was about vicarious learning. Vicarious learning represents respondents' confidence that, as job seekers during a pandemic, they faced tremendous challenges in securing a job. As our data suggested, our respondents had the highest score in the vicarious learning aspect. As shown in Table 2, respondents were asked to fill the instruments using VF to N scales, in which VF meant very frequent, F implied frequent, O signified occasionally, R meant rarely, and N represented never.

**Table 2. Frequency and Percentage of Respondents' Answers on Career Self-Efficacy (CSE) Scale**

| Item | Frequency | | | | | Percentage % | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | VF | F | O | R | N | VF | F | O | R | N |
| CSE 1 | 1 | 26 | 127 | 120 | 30 | 0.3 | 8.6 | 41.8 | 39.5 | 9.9 |
| CSE 2 | 36 | 145 | 101 | 19 | 3 | 11.8 | 47.7 | 2.6 | 6.3 | 1 |
| CSE 3 | 96 | 159 | 40 | 8 | 1 | 31.6 | 52.3 | 13.2 | 2.6 | 0.3 |
| CSE 4 | 69 | 131 | 75 | 24 | 5 | 22.7 | 43.2 | 24.7 | 7.9 | 1.6 |
| CSE 5 | 17 | 48 | 117 | 95 | 27 | 5.6 | 15.8 | 38.5 | 31.3 | 8.9 |
| CSE 6 | 46 | 102 | 88 | 42 | 26 | 15.2 | 33.6 | 28.9 | 13.8 | 8.6 |
| CSE 7 | 26 | 84 | 103 | 65 | 26 | 8.6 | 27.6 | 33.9 | 21.4 | 8.6 |
| CSE 8 | 57 | 134 | 74 | 37 | 2 | 18.8 | 44.2 | 24.3 | 12.2 | 0.7 |
| CSE 9 | 21 | 43 | 69 | 64 | 107 | 6.9 | 14.1 | 22.7 | 21.2 | 35.2 |
| CSE 10 | 22 | 33 | 91 | 97 | 61 | 7.2 | 10.9 | 29.9 | 31.9 | 20.1 |
| CSE 11 | 79 | 176 | 43 | 7 | 2 | 25 | 57.9 | 14.1 | 2.3 | 0.7 |
| CSE 12 | 76 | 154 | 54 | 16 | 4 | 25 | 50.7 | 17.8 | 5.3 | 1.3 |
| CSE 13 | 38 | 129 | 88 | 31 | 18 | 12.5 | 42.4 | 28.9 | 10.2 | 5.9 |
| CSE 14 | 52 | 144 | 90 | 17 | 1 | 17.1 | 47.4 | 29.6 | 5.6 | 0.3 |
| CSE 15 | 23 | 52 | 94 | 78 | 57 | 7.6 | 17.1 | 30.9 | 25.7 | 18.8 |
| CSE 16 | 17 | 104 | 135 | 33 | 15 | 5.6 | 34.2 | 44.4 | 10.9 | 4.9 |
| CSE 17 | 65 | 70 | 81 | 62 | 26 | 21.4 | 23 | 26.6 | 20.4 | 8.6 |
| CSE 18 | 20 | 81 | 98 | 54 | 51 | 6.6 | 26.6 | 32.3 | 17.8 | 16.8 |
| CSE 19 | 51 | 117 | 100 | 23 | 13 | 16.8 | 38.5 | 32.9 | 7.6 | 4.3 |
| CSE 20 | 44 | 138 | 97 | 21 | 4 | 14.5 | 45.4 | 31.9 | 6.9 | 1.3 |

Most of our research respondents have a moderate level of self-efficacy. The detail of respondents' self-efficacy is summarized in Table 3. These data suggested that seven respondents had low self-efficacy, while 226 and 71 respondents had moderate and high self-efficacy, respectively.

**Table 3. Respondents' Level of Career Self-Efficacy**

| Category | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Low | 7 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 2.3 |
| | Moderate | 226 | 74.3 | 74.3 | 76.6 |
| | High | 71 | 23.4 | 23.4 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 304 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 4 shows that the data with yellow highlight is the future career anxiety factors obtaining the highest frequency. The data suggested that most of our respondents experienced anxiety related to their future careers due to the economic decline during COVID-19. Further, our analysis also showed that fresh graduates experienced the highest anxiety about the employment environment factor, which was also caused by the economic decline. Table 4 presents the respondents' answers frequency on Future Career Anxiety Scale. In this scale, respondents were asked to rate their experience using the provided level, in which HA meant highly agree, A implied agree, D signified disagree, and HD represented highly disagree.

**Table 4. Frequency and Percentage of Respondents' Answers on Future Career Anxiety (FCA) Scale**

| Item | Frequency | | | | Percentage % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | HA | A | D | HD | HA | A | D | HD |
| FCA 1 | 81 | 153 | 63 | 7 | 26.6 | 50.3 | 20.7 | 2.3 |
| FCA 2 | 103 | 151 | 45 | 5 | 33.9 | 49.7 | 14.8 | 1.6 |
| FCA 3 | 68 | 134 | 98 | 4 | 22.4 | 44.1 | 32.2 | 1.3 |
| FCA 4 | 97 | 137 | 64 | 6 | 31.9 | 45.1 | 21.1 | 2 |
| FCA 5 | 59 | 121 | 102 | 22 | 19.4 | 39.8 | 33.6 | 7.2 |

Our analysis results suggested that the majority of respondents encountered high future career anxiety. As shown in Table 5, only ten of the respondents have a low level of future career anxiety, while 114 and 180 respondents faced moderate and high future career anxiety.

**Table 5. Respondents' Level of Future Career Anxiety**

| | Category | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Low | 10 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 3.3 |
| | Moderate | 114 | 37.5 | 37.5 | 40.8 |
| | High | 180 | 59.2 | 59.2 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 304 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

In addition, we also conducted a normality test on the obtained data using skewness and kurtosis test. The results of the skewness and kurtosis test are shown in Table 6. With variable X, the obtained ratio from the skewness on variable X with an error of skewness was -1.53, while the kurtosis ratio with the error of kurtosis was 1.71. Further, for the Y variable, we obtained skewness results with a skewness error of -1.39 and a kurtosis ratio with an error of kurtosis of 1.41. The obtained scores from those two variables are between -2 and 2, implying that the data have a normal distribution.

**Table 6. Results of Assumption of Normality**

| | Statistics | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | X | Y |
| N | Valid | 304 | 304 |
| | Missing | 0 | 0 |
| Skewness | | -.215 | -.195 |
| Std. Error of Skewness | | .140 | .140 |
| Kurtosis | | .479 | -.394 |
| Std. Error of Kurtosis | | .279 | .279 |

Table 7 presents the results of data analysis using SPSS, showing a negative correlation between career self-efficacy and future career anxiety, with 0.322 scores and a significance level of 0.000 at a 0.01 confidence level. On Table 7, **. correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). This finding showed a 0.000 < 0.01 significant score, signifying a significant correlation between career self-efficacy and future career anxiety in fresh graduates during the pandemic. As these two variables have a negative correlation, someone's higher career self-efficacy reflects their lower future career anxiety and vice versa.

**Table 7. Correlation between Career Self-Efficacy and Future Career Anxiety**

| | | CSE | FCA |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| CSE | Pearson Correlation | 1 | -.322** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 304 | 304 |
| FCA | Pearson Correlation | -.322** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 304 | 304 |

## 4. Discussion

Our data analysis results illustrate that most of the respondents have moderate career self-efficacy and high future career anxiety. Their moderate level of career self-efficacy is sufficient, but they face a considerable possibility of encountering high future career anxiety. This finding signifies the need to enhance students' career self-efficacy, aside from improving their soft skills and hard skills. Substantially, career self-efficacy represents individuals' behavior, so their practical skills and behavior should be developed simultaneously. Ardiyanti (2015) reported that PLANS training improves an individual's self-efficacy. Further, workshops on learning skills also increase people's self-efficacy (Rachmawati, 2008). Additionally, professional training has been confirmed to enhance an individual's self-efficacy (Davazdahemami, Luse, Scheibe, & Townsend, 2018). Therefore, an individual's self-efficacy is significantly affected by workshops and training to advance their personal performance (Zaki, Ali, Bakar, & Sarwar, 2019).

The results of our data analysis presented that the highest influencing factor for career self-efficacy is an individual's conformity views. During a pandemic, our respondents are aware that they face similar experiences with other jobseekers struggling to secure proper employment. The factors of someone's self-efficacy include past performance, accomplishment, verbal persuasion, emotional arousal, and vicarious learning (Nasta, 2007).

From the results of our data analysis, the most dominant source of respondents' career self-efficacy is vicarious learning. Vicarious learning drives someone to learn from other people's experiences through observation of their surroundings. In this case, respondents examine the attempts from other people to find jobs during the pandemic, so they can find common occurrences as other people. It is linear with a previous study discovering that vicarious learning carries effects on entrepreneurial students' self-efficacy (Nindyatri, 2013).

In addition to vicarious learning, the second most influencing factor for self-efficacy is social persuasion. Social persuasion originates from individual experience directed to giving direct advice, support, suggestions, and motivation from their closest people (Alwisol, 2011). Support from the social environment enhances individuals' confidence in their skills and ability to face problems with better approaches.

In addition, the obtained results on every future career anxiety factor show respondents' relatively high anxiety. Research reported anxiety as the second-highest mental health issue during a pandemic (Kaligis et al., 2020). This is worsened by the extensive effects of the pandemic on various aspects, including in the economic field. Therefore, the investigation on special management of mental health issues, especially anxiety on the uncertain economic condition and job field openings, is essential so we can identify the alternative solution to improve individual productivity.

The analysis results also showed a significant relationship between career self-efficacy and future career efficacy. This finding signifies a correlation between someone's career self-efficacy with their ability to face problems which further affects their anxiety. It is parallel with a study reporting a negative connection between physical self-efficacy and emotional efficacy toward the level of anxiety (Tahmassian & Moghadam, 2011). The central anxiety faced by our respondents is related to the decline in economic conditions induced by COVID-19. This economic decline also affects the available future jobs for our respondents. A study reported that Indonesia faces economic contraction that increases the number of poverty and unemployment and is expected to increase continuously (Maryanti, Netrawati, & Faezal, 2019).

Following our findings, the development of career self-efficacy intervention for general society is required to broaden their career self-efficacy through practical stages. One of the available alternatives is career plan training for fresh graduates to increase their career self-efficacy. Self-efficacy can be accelerated through experience in learning a skill along with modeling (Feist & Feist, 2010). Consequently, training for enhancing career self-efficacy for fresh graduates is necessary. The materials for training can involve the general knowledge of career and economy, along with a specific situation that provides participants with direct experience in professional careers and modeling of experience from various fields of professional. These aspects can be considered to be fundamental for career plan training outline for fresh graduates.

These findings carry implications for college students' career development. Further, our finding indicates that universities hold essential roles in attending students to secure their careers after graduation. For that reason, one of the possible interventions from the university is providing career counseling for students. During the counseling, counselors can act as a facilitator that aid students in planning their careers following the available career information. Besides, the counselor can also be a role model for the counselees (Upadhyay, 2018). As described by Rhode (2010) that career counseling significantly increases career maturity and self-efficacy compared to those who do not attend career counseling. Through a career plan, the individual can evaluate their skills and interest related to career opportunities while also determining their career purposes and practical activities for accelerating their career (Lika, Iswari, & Daharnis, 2022).

## 5. Conclusion

The findings from this study suggested a negative correlation between career self-efficacy and future career anxiety. It implies that a higher level of career self-efficacy represents lower future career anxiety. The importance of career self-efficacy stimulates the need for further studies related to efficient intervention. Thus, we suggested future researchers conduct a study on career planning using a research and development approach, focusing on fresh graduates' self-efficacy to lower their career anxiety. Further, the establishment of a career plan module should also involve numerous professionals, especially the experts in economy and other related fields.

## Author Contributions

All authors have equal contributions to the paper. All the authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

## Funding

No funding support was received.

## Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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# Hubungan antara Career Self-Efficacy dengan Kecemasan Karier Masa Depan pada Fresh Graduate Indonesia di Masa Pandemi

**Kata kunci**

*Career self-efficacy*
*Future career anxiety*
*Fresh graduate*
Pandemi

**Abstrak**

Kondisi tidak menentu terkait lapangan pekerjaan menjadi salah satu hal yang berdampak pada pencari kerja sebagai akibat pandemi COVID-19. Kecemasan terhadap karier di masa depan tampaknya menjadi masalah baru dan semakin memburuk pada *fresh graduate*. Di sisi lain, *self-efficacy* merupakan hal penting dalam menghadapi perubahan, termasuk kecemasan karier, dalam hal ini disebut dengan *career self-efficacy*. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui hubungan antara *career self-efficacy* dengan *future career anxiety* pada *fresh graduate* di Indonesia. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode kuantitatif dengan menggunakan studi korelasional. Sampel penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa tingkat akhir dengan teknik penarikan sampel menggunakan *random sampling*. Instrumen yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah *career self-efficacy* dan *future career anxiety* dan menggunakan teknik analisis data *product moment*. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa ada hubungan negatif antara *career self-efficacy* dengan *future career anxiety*. Dengan demikian, semakin tinggi *career self-efficacy* seseorang, semakin rendah tingkat *future career anxiety* yang dialaminya.