

Analysis of psychological and academic factors related to anxiety about entering the workforce among final semester students Payung Negeri Aceh Darussalam Health Sciences Institute 2025

Rahmiati Tagore Putri¹, Saipullah²

^{1,2}Kesehatan Masyarakat, STIKes Payung Negeri Aceh Darussalam, Aceh, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Anxiety about entering the workforce is an emotional condition characterized by feelings of tension, worry, and uncertainty about one's ability to cope with the demands and transition to a new work environment. The purpose of this study is to examine the intellectual and psychological aspects of final-year STIKes Payung Negeri Aceh Darussalam students' worry about starting a career in 2025. The investigation was carried out during October 1-3, 2025, using a cross-sectional study design and a quantitative analytical approach. The Slovin algorithm and simple random sampling were used to choose 60 responders from the 152 final-year students that made up the study population. Data were collected through interviews using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS with the Chi-Square test ($p < 0.05$). The results of the study show a significant relationship between self-confidence ($p=0.045$), social support ($p=0.033$), work experience ($p=0.006$), work readiness ($p=0.021$), and sources of information ($p=0.006$) with anxiety about entering the workforce. These results confirm that anxiety is more influenced by psychological factors and personal experiences than academic achievement alone. Therefore, universities need to develop career development programs, soft skills training, counseling, and internships to improve students' mental readiness for the world of work.

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Corresponding Author:

Rahmiati Tagore Putri,
Kesehatan Masyarakat,
STIKes Payung Negeri Aceh Darussalam,
Jl. Bireuen-Takengon Km.82,5 No.86 Lut Kucak, Kec. Wih Pesam, Kab. Bener Meriah Prov. Aceh, 24581,
Indonesia
Email: rahmitagoreputri@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Students in fulfilling their obligations and participating in campus activities are certainly not immune from anxiety and many students are prone to experience anxiety due to changes in their learning environment under certain circumstances. Therefore, these obligations can cause students to experience academic anxiety. Academic anxiety is commonly experienced by

students in their first semester and final semester (Felisca & Riza, 2022). Some of them even visited a psychologist's clinic to get the treatment they needed (Dwidiyanti et al., 2021).

Psychological health can be influenced by biological factors that include heredity, head injuries, and chronic diseases. Biological factors can include neurotransmitter disorders, hereditary factors, brain damage, and alcohol or illegal drug use (Mawaddah et al., 2020). This condition can potentially cause mental disorders such as anxiety, depression, and other emotional disorders if not handled properly (Rivaldi, 2024). In the context of students, coping strategies play an important role in maintaining psychological well-being, especially when academic pressure exceeds one's capacity (Fayyaza et al., 2025).

After graduating from college, students will encounter a new hurdle in the workplace. One of the first issues brought on by the fierce competition in the workplace is finding a job. According to research by Berliana & Flora (2022), getting a job related to one's subject of study is highly desirable, particularly for recent graduates. According to the study's findings, women have higher levels of anxiety than men when it comes to confronting the workplace ($t=-2.427$, $p<0.05$). Anxiety among final-year students who are approaching the end of their education is a phenomena brought on by the growing number of college graduates who have not yet secured work. Research carried out by (Risnia & Sugiasih, 2021) discovered that some students' poor self-confidence causes them to endure anxiety while confronting the working world, including fear, tension, bewilderment, lack of appetite, and excessive worry.

The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) reports that 7.86 million Indonesians were unemployed in February 2024, which is 5.32% of the country's total labor force. Compared to February 2023, when it was still at 5.86%, Indonesia's unemployment rate dropped in February 2024. In general, Indonesia's TPT number has likewise tended to drop recently (Sindi Nursalam et al., 2024). This study is expected to provide an overview of the psychological and academic factors related to anxiety about entering the workforce, particularly among final-year students at STIKes Payung Negeri Aceh Darussalam in 2025.

RESEARCH METHOD

The purpose of this cross-sectional, analytical quantitative study is to ascertain how academic and psychological variables relate to final-year students' anxiety levels about starting their careers at a certain moment in time (Sugiyono, 2018). At STIKes Payung Negeri Aceh Darussalam, the study was carried out between October 1–3, 2025. The 152 final-year students at Aceh Darussalam State Health Sciences College in 2025 made up the study's population. The sample size of 60 respondents was calculated using the Slovin algorithm with an acceptable error rate of 10% ($\alpha = 0.1$). Each member of the population had an equal chance of being chosen as a respondent using the simple random sample technique, which was intended to proportionately reflect the population's characteristics (Akbar, 2022).

Using structured questionnaires that were created based on signs from each research variable, in-person interviews were used to collect data. Two enumerators who had undergone extensive training to guarantee a consistent comprehension of the instruments' content and research implementation techniques helped with the data collection process. To guarantee the precision and consistency of the measurement tool, the questionnaire was put through validity and reliability testing prior to usage. The factors included in the study included: a) Dependent variable: Anxiety about entering the workforce, categorized into three levels: mild anxiety, moderate anxiety, and severe anxiety; b) Independent variables: Psychological and academic factors, including self-confidence, social support, work experience, work readiness, and sources of information.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) application was used to examine the data. Each variable's proportions and frequency distribution were described using univariate analysis, whereas the Chi-Square (χ^2) test was used in bivariate analysis to ascertain the association

between independent and dependent variables with a significance level of $p < 0.05$ (Notoatmodjo, 2018). The STIKes Payung Negeri Aceh Darussalam Research Ethics Committee has granted ethical approval for this study under the number 022/STIKes/PNAD/LPPM/X/2025. Prior to the interview, each participant was asked to sign an informed consent form after being briefed about the goals and methods of the study. Researchers guarantee the confidentiality of respondents' identities and conduct research in accordance with public health research ethics principles, including respect for autonomy, benefits, fairness, and no actions that harm respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Univariate Analysis

The respondents in this study were students of the Bachelor of Public Health and Diploma III Midwifery programs at STIKes Payung Negeri Aceh Darussalam. The characteristics of the respondents in this study will provide an overview of the frequency distribution of gender, age, study program. An overview of the frequency distribution of gender, age, and study program will be provided by the characteristics of the study participants, Grade Point Average (GPA), self-assurance, social support, job experience, preparedness for the workforce, knowledge sources, and worry about starting a career. Table 1 displays the data regarding the distribution of respondent characteristics.

Table 1. General characteristics

No	Characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%) or Average
1	Gender		
	Male	13	21.7
	Women	47	78.3
2	Age		
	21-23 years	50	83.3
	>24 years	10	16.7
3	Study Program		
	Bachelor of Public Health	48	80.0
	D3 Midwifery	12	20.0
4	Grade Point Average (GPA)		
	Height	38	63.3
	Currently	22	36.7
5	Self-confidence		
	Height	19	31.7
	Currently	22	36.7
	Low	19	31.7
6	Social Support		
	Supporting	41	68.3
	Does not support	19	31.7
7	Work Experience		
	There is	15	25.0
	Nothing	45	75.0
8	Work Readiness		
	Height	35	58.3
	Low	25	41.7
9	Information Source		
	There is	39	65.0
	Nothing	21	35.0
10	Anxiety About Entering the Workforce		
	Severe Anxiety	21	35.0
	Moderately anxious	20	33.3
	Mild Anxiety	19	31.7

Based on the results of a study of 60 respondents, a general picture of characteristics was obtained, including gender, age, study program, cumulative grade point average (GPA),

confidence level, social support, work experience, work readiness, sources of information, and level of anxiety about entering the workforce. The majority of respondents in this study were female, numbering 47 (78.3%), while male respondents numbered 13 (21.7%). This composition shows that female respondents were more dominant than male respondents. This is in line with the general condition in health study programs, which are generally dominated by female students. In terms of age group, the majority of respondents were in the 21–23 age range, numbering 50 people (83.3%), while 10 people (16.7%) were over 24 years old. This shows that most respondents are in the young adult phase, which is an important transition period from education to work, where anxiety about work readiness often arises (Pranata, 2025).

Based on the study program, it is known that most of the respondents came from the Bachelor of Public Health Study Program, totaling 48 people (80.0%), while the rest came from the Diploma III Midwifery Study Program, totaling 12 people (20.0%). This distribution shows that respondents from the public health field participated more in this study than those from the midwifery field. In terms of Grade Point Average (GPA), it was found that 38 respondents (63.3%) were in the high category, while 22 respondents (36.7%) were in the medium category. This indicates that the majority of respondents have good academic achievements, which can be an important asset in building job readiness and confidence to face the world of work.

The respondents' confidence levels showed a relatively balanced distribution between the high, medium, and low categories. There were 22 respondents (36.7%) in the medium category, while there were 19 respondents (31.7%) in each of the high and low categories. This condition illustrates that most respondents have a fairly good level of confidence, although there are still groups who feel less confident about their abilities in facing work challenges. Meanwhile, in terms of social support, the majority of respondents stated that they received social support from 41 people (68.3%), while 19 people (31.7%) stated that they did not receive social support. This social support can come from family, peers, or the campus environment, and plays an important role in reducing anxiety levels and increasing work readiness.

Based on work experience, it was found that most respondents did not have work experience, totaling 45 people (75.0%), while 15 people (25.0%) did have work experience. This shows that most respondents have not been directly exposed to the world of work, so they are still limited in practical experience and adaptation to professional demands. However, the respondents' overall level of work readiness was generally good, with 35 people (58.3%) in the high category and 25 people (41.7%) in the low category. These findings indicate that the majority of respondents are sufficiently prepared to enter the workforce, both in terms of knowledge and attitude.

Furthermore, most respondents stated that they had sources of information about the world of work, totaling 39 people (65.0%), while 21 people (35.0%) did not have adequate sources of information. The availability of information about the world of work, such as career opportunities, required qualifications, and the dynamics of the professional world, can affect an individual's readiness to face this transition period. The level of anxiety about entering the workforce shows that 21 people (35.0%) are in the severely anxious category, 20 people (33.3%) are in the moderately anxious category, and 19 people (31.7%) are in the mildly anxious category. This distribution shows that most respondents experience moderate to severe anxiety. This condition may be caused by a lack of work experience, limited social support, or concerns about the uncertainty of the world of work.

Bivariate Analysis

A bivariate analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between psychological and academic factors and the level of anxiety about entering the workforce among final-year students at STIKes Payung Negeri Aceh Darussalam in 2025. The variables analyzed included self-confidence, social support, work experience, work readiness, and sources of information. As indicated in Table 2, the Chi-Square test with a significance level of $p < 0.05$ was the statistical test employed.

Table 2. Analysis of psychological and academic factors and levels of anxiety facing the working world among final semester students

Measurement Results	Anxiety About Entering the Workforce						Total		P -value
	Severe Anxiety		Moderately anxious		Mild Anxiety		N	%	
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Self-confidence									
Height	11	18.3	2	3.3	6	10.0	19	31.7	0.045
Currently	6	10.0	8	13.3	8	13.3	22	36.7	
Low	4	6.7	10	16.7	5	8.3	19	31.7	
Social Support									
Supporting	18	30.0	14	23.3	9	15.0	41	68.3	0.033
Does not support	3	5.0	6	10.0	10	16.7	19	31.7	
Work Experience									
There is	2	3.3	10	16.7	3	5.0	15	25.0	0.006
Nothing	19	31.7	10	16.7	16	26.7	45	75.0	
Work Readiness									
Height	10	16.7	9	15.0	16	26.7	35	58.3	0.021
Low	11	18.3	11	18.3	3	5.0	25	41.7	
Information Source									
There is	9	15.0	14	23.3	16	26.7	39	65.0	0.006
Nothing	12	20.0	6	10.0	3	5.0	21	35.0	
Total	21	35.0	20	33.3	19	31.7	60	100	

The analysis revealed a strong correlation ($\rho = 0.045$) between anxiety about entering the employment and levels of self-confidence. According to the findings, people who have low self-confidence typically feel more anxious than people who have high self-confidence. The majority of the 19 respondents with high self-confidence fell into the mild anxiety category (10.0%), whereas 6.7% of those with low self-confidence reported severe anxiety. This demonstrates that a person's anxiety level in the workplace decreases with increasing self-confidence.

Additionally, there is a strong correlation between anxiety levels and social support ($\rho = 0.033$). Respondents who received social support tended to have lower anxiety levels than respondents who did not receive social support. Of the 41 respondents who received social support, most were in the severe anxiety category (30.0%) and moderate anxiety category (23.3%), while in the group without social support, severe anxiety was still found in 5.0% and mild anxiety in only 16.7%. These findings confirm that social support plays an important role in reducing students' anxiety levels, especially when facing the challenges of transitioning into the workforce.

The work experience variable also showed a significant relationship with anxiety levels ($\rho = 0.006$). Respondents who had work experience tended to experience less anxiety than those who did not have work experience. Of the 15 respondents who had work experience, most experienced moderate anxiety (16.7%), while of the 45 respondents who did not have work experience, the proportion of severe anxiety reached 31.7%. These results indicate that prior work experience can help students adapt mentally and emotionally to the world of work, thereby reducing anxiety about career uncertainty.

In addition, there is a significant relationship between work readiness and the level of anxiety about entering the workforce ($\rho = 0.021$). Respondents with high work readiness tend to experience less anxiety than those with low work readiness. Of the 35 respondents with high work readiness, most were in the mild anxiety category (26.7%), while in the low work readiness group, the proportion of severe anxiety was higher (18.3%). These results indicate that the higher a person's work readiness, both mentally and in terms of competence, the lower their level of anxiety.

Anxiety over the workplace was significantly correlated with the information source variable ($\rho = 0.006$). Anxiety levels were generally lower among those who had access to knowledge about the working environment. Mild anxiety accounted for the biggest percentage of the 39 respondents with information sources (26.7%), whereas severe anxiety accounted for 20.0%

of those without information sources. This indicates that the availability of information about job opportunities, recruitment processes, and labor market conditions can reduce uncertainty and lower students' anxiety levels as they face the transition to the world of work.

The Relationship Between Self-Confidence and Anxiety Levels

Most individuals who experience anxiety will disrupt their personal balance and feel as if they have no freedom within themselves. Usually, this anxiety will appear and be characterized by feelings of fear, tension, restlessness, nervousness, sweating, and so on. This study is in line with Risnia & Sugiasih (2021) at the University of 17 Agustus 1945 Semarang, demonstrating the normality and linearity of the data distribution. This analysis yielded a correlation value of $r_{xy} = -0.457$ with 0.005 ($p < 0.01$). This indicates the acceptance of the research hypothesis. In other words, among final semester students, there is a negative correlation between self-confidence and fear while confronting the workplace (Risnia & Sugiasih, 2021).

According to Selvi Hanifah's (2022) research, anxiety when it comes to the job market and self-confidence are significantly correlated negatively. The analytical results, which reveal a correlation value of $r = -0.441$, $n = 213$, and $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$), support this. This implies that a person's anxiety level in the workplace decreases with increasing self-confidence. The study's findings highlight how crucial it is for final-year students to boost their self-confidence in order to lessen worry as they get ready to enter the workforce (Selvi Hanifah et al., 2022). Similarly, among final-year students at Mercu Buana University in Yogyakarta, Moslem & Abdullah's study reveals a negative correlation ($r_{xy} = -0.702$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) between self-confidence and worry about entering the workforce. This indicates that among final-year students at Mercu Buana University Yogyakarta, worry over starting a career decreases with increasing self-confidence. On the other hand, among final-year students at Mercu Buana University Yogyakarta, concern about joining the workforce increases with decreasing self-confidence. (Moslem & Abdullah, 2024).

Relationship Between Social Support and Anxiety Levels

When people receive positive social support from their surroundings, they will view their experiences as not all that horrible, which will lessen their anxiety and make them feel safe and at ease since they feel loved, cared for, and accepted in their surroundings (Alif & Ilham, 2021). Students in their last year require social assistance since it is crucial when people are struggling. As a result, they require close, trustworthy individuals to assist them in resolving these issues (Ian Rif et al., 2018).

According to Hanny & Dinni (2020), research utilizing simple regression analysis reveals a value of $p = 0.013$ ($p < 0.05$) and $r_{xy} = -0.175$. These findings show a strong inverse association between worry about starting a career and social support from parents. Anxiety about starting a career decreases when parental social support increases and vice versa. Anxiety over starting a career is successfully influenced by parental social support by 3.1%, with other factors not included in this study accounting for the remaining 96.9% (Hanny & Dinni, 2020). Furthermore, this study is in line with Efrida & Dyorita (2022). According to the results of the hypothesis test, social support is associated with anxiety at a significance level of $0.000 < 0.05$. This indicates that social support and anxiety are negatively correlated, with an individual experiencing less anxiety the more social support they receive (Efrida & Dyorita Kh, 2022).

Relationship Between Work Experience and Anxiety Levels

For recent grads, joining the workforce is a difficult and unfamiliar experience. It is anticipated that recent college graduates will be able to use their hard and soft abilities to land a respectable job. However, because there is an imbalance between the quantity of job seekers and the available positions, competition for work during the epidemic has become more challenging. This implies that there will be even more competition for good employment that fit one's skill set. To find work, recent grads must contend with a high number of job searchers (Nestri, 2022).

Therefore, it is important to prepare oneself before entering the workforce in order to prevent students from suffering anxiety when confronting the working world. Students who prepare for their careers are far better able to choose their careers. Additionally, preparing pupils for the workforce can help them feel less anxious. According to Pearson's theory, pupils who are ready to enter the workforce will have less worry. Leadership, digital literacy, communication, intelligence, entrepreneurship, global citizenship, problem solving, teamwork, and organizational skills are a few of the things that need to be ready (Tesalonia & Wibowo, 2023).

Based on the results of Adjarwati's (2020) study, a correlation value of $r = -0.283$ with $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$) was found, suggesting that among students at SMKN 1 Gambut, self-efficacy and worry about joining the workforce have a strong negative association. According to the computed coefficient of determination (r^2), which is 0.080, the variable of self-efficacy has an effective link of 8% with anxiety when confronting the workplace (Adjarwati et al., 2020). Additionally, Manurung & Paska's (2023) study reveals a highly significant negative correlation (correlation coefficient of -0.987 and $p = 0.000$ (< 0.05)) between career maturity and anxiety about entering the workforce among recent graduates at HKBP Nommensen University in Medan. This implies that the more mature a person's career is, the less anxious they feel about the workplace (Manurung & Paska, 2023).

Relationship between Work Readiness and Anxiety Level

In order to succeed in competitive job selection, particularly during job interviews, positive thinking is crucial (Saputra, 2022). This research is consistent with Wahyu (2019). There is a correlation between self-efficacy and job preparedness with anxiety among final-year students at Unissula Semarang, according to the hypothesis test results, which reveal a value of $R = 0.621$ with a significance of 0.000 ($p < 0.01$). Thus, it can be said that self-efficacy and job readiness are 38.5% predictive of anxiety levels. With a value of $r_{x1y} = -0.556$ and a significance of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), the partial correlation test between self-efficacy and anxiety among students revealed a significant negative connection after accounting for job preparedness. With a value of $r_{x2y} = -0.603$ and a significance of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), the findings of the partial correlation test between work readiness and anxiety, adjusting for self-efficacy, indicate a significant negative association (Wahyu et al., 2019).

In a similar vein, Angraini (2021) reports that the study's findings yielded a correlation value of -0.417 at significance level (p) sig 0.000. The hypothesis is accepted since the value (p) sig $0.000 < 0.01$. This suggests that among STKIP Muhammadiyah Bungo final-year students, there is a substantial negative correlation between self-efficacy and worry about starting a career. These unfavorable findings suggest that final-year students' worry about joining the workforce decreases with increasing self-efficacy. Self-efficacy has an effective 17% impact on anxiety (Angraini, 2021).

Relationship between Information Sources and Anxiety Levels

Aspects of self-confidence, self-efficacy, self-awareness, self-regulation, self-concept, vocational maturity, career adaptability, career orientation, and social support from family, parents, and peers are known to affect final semester students' anxiety when confronting the working world (Kadek, 2024). Anxiety about starting a career can have a number of detrimental consequences on people, including a drop in drive to succeed, a diminished desire to better oneself, and even social disorder (Kadek et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

Strategic recommendations for higher education institutions to reduce student job anxiety include strengthening career development programs that are integrated with the curriculum, soft skills training that focuses on increasing confidence and job readiness, and providing easily accessible career and psychological counseling services. In addition, it is necessary to expand student access to information about the world of work through internships, career preparation, and industry

partner involvement, as well as strengthening social support through the role of academic advisors and a supportive academic environment, so that students' mental readiness to face the transition to the world of work can be continuously improved. The limitations of this study lie in its focus on psychological aspects and personal experiences of students within a specific institutional context and time frame, meaning that the results do not fully represent the diversity of student characteristics at other universities. Furthermore, the use of a non-longitudinal research design limits the ability to capture the dynamics of changes in student work anxiety over time, so that generalizing the findings to a broader student population must be done with caution.

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