

Social Support and Anxiety in Final-Year Psychology Students' Career Transition

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Keywords:

Social Support
Anxiety
Workplace
Students
Psychology

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the relationship between social support and anxiety when facing the job market for students in their 6th to 8th semesters at the Faculty of Psychology, Prima Indonesia University. The method applied in this study is quantitative with a correlational approach, involving 167 students through purposive sampling techniques. The instruments used were social support and anxiety scales that had been tested for validity and reliability. For data analysis, the Pearson Product-Moment technique was used with the help of SPSS version 22 software. The results of the study showed a significant negative correlation between social support and anxiety levels ($r = -0,543$; $p = 0,000$), with an effective contribution of 30.5%. This means that the greater the social support received, the lower the level of anxiety experienced in facing the world of work. Conversely, the less social support obtained, the greater the anxiety when facing the world of work for students. This relationship is considered a strong one because social support has been proven to help students overcome anxiety, improve mental health, and support academic success. This study highlights the importance of the role of family, friends, colleagues, lecturers, and a positive and supportive environment.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Final-year university students are individuals who are currently undergoing the transition from higher education to the workforce (Zahroh et al., 2025). At this stage, students are not only required to complete academic responsibilities such as undergraduate theses or final projects, but are also expected to determine their career direction and prepare themselves to enter the labor market. This transition frequently generates psychological pressure because students must adapt to uncertainties related to employment opportunities, professional competencies, and increasingly competitive labor market demands (Virginia & Hastuti, 2025). Individuals in the emerging adulthood phase commonly experience emotional instability, identity exploration, and concerns regarding their future, particularly in relation to employment and career development (Maghfiroh & Dewi, 2023).

From the perspective of career development theory, final-year students are considered to be in the career implementation stage, a phase in which individuals begin developing commitments toward occupational choices and professional goals (Ummah et al., 2025). The transition into the workforce often triggers anxiety due to inadequate readiness to face professional demands, limited work experience, and uncertainty regarding future career opportunities. Anxiety in facing the workforce may be understood as an emotional condition characterized by fear, worry, and tension when individuals think about entering the professional environment and confronting their future careers. Anxiety is defined as an emotional response that arises from perceived threats or dangers experienced by individuals (Faozi et al., 2023). Furthermore, (Susilarini, 2022) explained that anxiety encompasses physical, emotional, and cognitive aspects, including panic, excessive worry, difficulty concentrating, as well as physiological symptoms such as trembling and excessive sweating.

Anxiety related to entering the workforce among final-year students may be influenced by various factors, including academic pressure, career uncertainty, social demands, and low self-confidence regarding personal competencies (Zulfahmi & Andriany, 2021). Social and environmental factors also play an important role in influencing individual anxiety levels, particularly when individuals experience unresolved psychological conflicts (Umihastanti & Frianto, 2022). In this context, social support is considered one of the protective factors that may help individuals reduce psychological distress during the transition into the workforce.

Social support refers to emotional, informational, instrumental, and appraisal assistance obtained from social networks such as family, peers, and significant others (Nazhif Robbani & Nafisatuzzahra, 2025). Social support is also defined as attention, care, and assistance received from supportive social relationships that may enhance self-confidence and strengthen an individual's ability to cope with stressful situations (Wardani et al., 2023). In addition, (Sarafino et al., 2020) classified social support into five dimensions, namely emotional support, instrumental support, informational support, appraisal support, and social network support. The presence of social support enables individuals to feel valued, cared for, and connected to others, thereby helping to reduce anxiety when facing life challenges, including career transitions.

Previous studies have demonstrated that social support is associated with anxiety in the workforce among final-year students. Research conducted by (Mora et al., 2020) found a negative relationship between social support and workforce anxiety among Pharmacy students, indicating that higher levels of social support tend to reduce anxiety levels. Similar findings were also reported by (Santo & Alfian, 2021), who identified a significant negative relationship between social support and anxiety in the workforce. Nevertheless, studies examining this relationship among Psychology students remain relatively limited, particularly within the context of Indonesian higher education institutions. Psychology students represent an important population for investigation because they are expected to possess knowledge regarding mental health and emotional regulation, yet they still encounter career-related uncertainty and psychological pressure after graduation.

Based on the explanations above, this study aims to examine the relationship between social support and anxiety in the workforce

among final-year students of the Faculty of Psychology at Universitas Prima Indonesia. This research is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of psychological studies concerning career anxiety and social support, while also providing practical implications for educational institutions in designing career guidance and psychological assistance programs for final-year students. The hypothesis proposed in this study is that there is a negative relationship between social support and anxiety in facing the workforce, meaning that higher levels of social support received by students are associated with lower levels of anxiety regarding entering the workforce.

2. METHOD

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationship between social support and anxiety in the workforce among final-year students of the Faculty of Psychology at Universitas Prima Indonesia. The independent variable in this study was social support, while anxiety in facing the workforce functioned as the dependent variable. The population consisted of 320 active undergraduate students from the 2021–2022 academic cohorts. The sample size was determined using the Isaac and Michael sample size table at a 5% significance level, resulting in a total sample of 167 participants. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, with several inclusion criteria: (1) students enrolled in semesters 6–8, (2) active undergraduate students in the Faculty of Psychology, and (3) students who were not currently employed. Students outside these criteria or those unwilling to participate were excluded from the study.

Data were collected using Likert-scale questionnaires consisting of four response categories: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1) for favorable items. Reverse scoring procedures were applied to unfavorable items. The study utilized two research instruments, namely the Social Support Scale and the Anxiety Scale. The Social Support Scale was developed based on the theory proposed by Sarafino et al. (), which includes five dimensions: emotional support, instrumental support, informational support, appraisal support, and social network support. The initial scale consisted of 50 items, including 25 favorable and 25 unfavorable statements. Examples of items include “I receive encouragement from

people closest to me when facing difficulties” and “I feel that no one cares about my problems.” Meanwhile, the Anxiety Scale was constructed based on the anxiety dimensions proposed (Sarafino et al., 2020), consisting of physical, emotional, and cognitive aspects of anxiety. The scale initially consisted of 42 items comprising 21 favorable and 21 unfavorable statements, such as “I feel worried when thinking about my future career” and “I remain calm when discussing employment after graduation.”

Prior to the main data collection, a pilot study was conducted on 75 students from semesters 6–8 at Universitas Medan Area on June 12, 2025. Instrument validity was examined using Corrected Item-Total Correlation, with items considered valid when the correlation coefficient exceeded 0.30 ($r > 0.30$). On the Social Support Scale, 34 out of 50 items were retained as valid, with item-total correlation coefficients ranging from 0.305 to 0.664. The reliability test using Cronbach’s Alpha produced a coefficient of 0.912, indicating excellent internal consistency. For the Anxiety Scale, 29 out of 42 items were retained as valid, with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.322 to 0.634. The reliability coefficient obtained from Cronbach’s Alpha was 0.896, indicating that the scale demonstrated good reliability for research purposes.

Data analysis was conducted using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation with the assistance of IBM SPSS Statistics to determine the relationship between social support and anxiety in the workforce. Prior to hypothesis testing, assumption tests were performed, including normality and linearity tests. The normality test aimed to determine whether the data distribution was normal, with significance values greater than 0.05 indicating normal distribution. The linearity test was conducted to determine whether a linear relationship existed between the independent and dependent variables. A significance value below 0.05 indicated a linear relationship between social support and anxiety variables.

Ethical considerations were also implemented in this study. All participants voluntarily agreed to participate after receiving information regarding the research objectives and procedures through informed consent. Participant anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the research process, and the collected data were used solely for academic purposes.

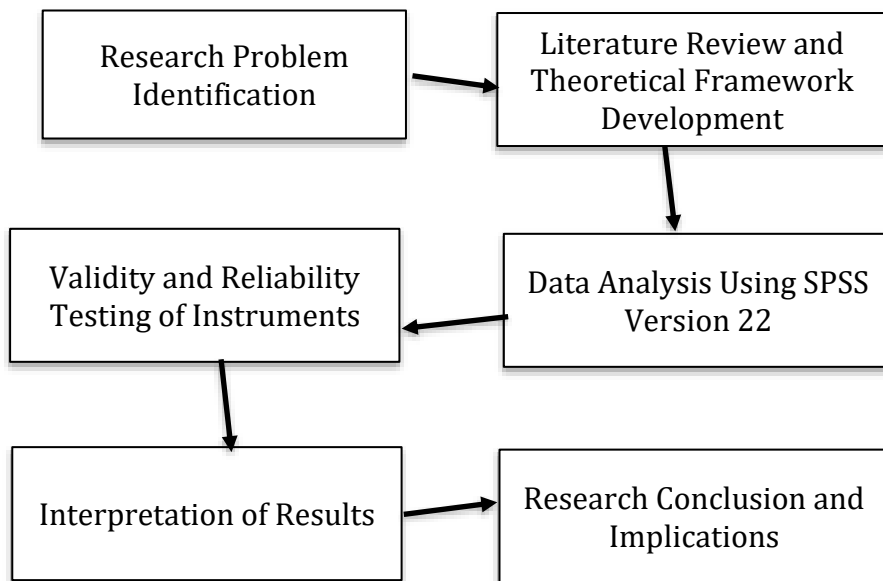


Figure 1. Research Flow Chart

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Social Support

The aggressive behavior scale consisted of 37 items, each rated on a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 4. Thus, the possible total score ranged from a minimum of 37 (37×1) to a maximum of 148 (37×4). Based on this range, the hypothetical mean was calculated as 92.5, and the hypothetical standard deviation was 18.5.

The empirical results showed that the respondents obtained a mean score of 115.33 with a standard deviation of 18.387.

Table 2. Comparison of Empirical and Hypothetical Data of the Social Support Variable

| Variable | Empirical | | | | Hypothetical | | | |
|----------------|-----------|-----|--------|-------|--------------|-----|------|----|
| | Min | Max | Mean | SD | Min | Max | Mean | SD |
| Social Support | 68 | 133 | 101,49 | 12,66 | 34 | 136 | 85 | 17 |

The analysis of social support levels revealed that the empirical mean score was higher than the hypothetical mean score ($101.49 > 85$). This finding indicates that the respondents generally

demonstrated a higher level of social support compared to the hypothetical population average. Furthermore, the respondents were classified into three categories of social support levels, namely low, moderate, and high. The categorization results are presented in the following table.

Table 3. Categorization of Social Support

| No | Guide | Score | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|--|-------------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| 1. | $X < (\mu - 1\sigma)$ | $X < 68$ | Low | 0 | 0% |
| 2. | $(\mu - 1\sigma) \leq X < (\mu + 1\sigma)$ | $68 \leq x < 102$ | Medium | 83 | 49,7% |
| 3. | $X \geq (\mu + 1\sigma)$ | $X \geq 102$ | High | 84 | 50,3% |
| Total | | | | 167 | 100% |

Table 3 shows that out of 167 respondents, none of the participants (0%) were categorized as having low social support. Meanwhile, 83 respondents (49.7%) were classified as having a moderate level of social support, and 84 respondents (50.3%) were categorized as having a high level of social support. These findings indicate that the majority of respondents tended to receive moderate to high levels of social support from their surrounding environment.

3.2. Anxiety

The Anxiety Scale consisted of 29 items, each measured using a four-point Likert scale ranging from one to four. The minimum possible score on the scale was 29, while the maximum possible score was 116, resulting in a hypothetical mean score of 72.5. Meanwhile, the hypothetical standard deviation was calculated as 14.5. Based on the respondents' answers to the Anxiety Scale, the empirical mean score obtained was 65.27, with an empirical standard deviation of 13.39.

Table 4. Comparison of Empirical and Hypothetical Scores of Anxiety

| Variable | Empirical | | | SD | Hypothetical | | | SD |
|----------|-----------|-----|-------|-------|--------------|-----|------|------|
| | Min | Max | Mean | | Min | Max | Mean | |
| Anxiety | 29 | 103 | 65,27 | 13,39 | 29 | 116 | 72,5 | 14,5 |

Based on the anxiety assessment results, the empirical mean score was lower than the hypothetical mean score ($65.27 < 72.5$). This finding indicates that the anxiety level experienced by the participants tended to be lower than the average level theoretically expected in the general population. Therefore, it can be concluded that the

respondents generally demonstrated relatively low levels of anxiety in facing the workforce. Furthermore, to provide a more detailed interpretation of anxiety levels, the participants were categorized into three groups: low, moderate, and high anxiety based on the standard deviation classification.

Table 5. Categorization of Anxiety

| No | Guide | Score | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|--|------------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | $X < (\mu - 1\sigma)$ | $X < 58$ | Low | 45 | 26,95% |
| 2 | $(\mu - 1\sigma) \leq X < (\mu + 1\sigma)$ | $58 \leq x < 87$ | Medium | 114 | 68,26% |
| 3 | $X \geq (\mu + 1\sigma)$ | $X \geq 87$ | High | 8 | 4,79% |
| Total | | | | 167 | 100% |

Based on Table 5, out of 167 respondents, 45 individuals (26.95%) were categorized as having low levels of anxiety, 114 individuals (68.26%) were categorized as having moderate levels of anxiety, and 8 individuals (4.79%) were categorized as having high levels of anxiety. These findings indicate that the majority of final-year students experienced anxiety at a moderate level when facing the transition into the workforce.

3.3. Hypothesis Testing

Table 6. Correlation between Father Involvement and Aggressive Behavior

| Analysis | Pearson Correlation | Significance (p) |
|-------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Correlation | -0,543 | 0,000 |

As shown in the table above, the results of the analysis indicated that the Pearson Product-Moment correlation coefficient was ($r = -0.534$) with a significance value of ($p = 0.000$) ($p < 0.05$). These findings demonstrate a significant negative relationship between social support and anxiety among final-year students in facing the workforce. This means that higher levels of social support are associated with lower levels of anxiety, whereas lower social support tends to be associated with higher anxiety levels. Therefore, the proposed hypothesis in this study was accepted.

Table 7. Coefficient of Determination

| | R | R Squared | Eta | Eta Squared |
|-----------------------------|----------|------------------|------------|--------------------|
| Social Support * Anxiety | 0,553 | 0,305 | 0,301 | 2,027 |

The coefficient of determination (R^2) obtained in this study was 0.305, indicating that social support contributed 30.5% to the level of anxiety experienced by final-year students in facing the workforce. Meanwhile, the remaining 69.5% was influenced by other factors not examined in this study, such as self-confidence, career readiness, academic pressure, family expectations, and individual coping strategies.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that social support has a significant negative relationship with anxiety toward entering the workforce among final-year students of the Faculty of Psychology at Universitas Prima Indonesia. These findings indicate that the higher the level of social support received by students, the lower the level of anxiety they experience during the transition into the professional world. Social support serves as a source of psychological strength that helps individuals feel safer, valued, and supported in coping with the pressures and concerns experienced during the final stage of their academic studies.

The results of this study are consistent with the social support theory proposed by (Sarafino et al., 2020), which states that emotional, informational, and instrumental support can help individuals reduce psychological distress and improve coping abilities in stressful situations. Final-year students commonly face various pressures, including career uncertainty, academic demands, job competition, and concerns regarding self-competence (Maghfiroh & Dewi, 2023). Under such conditions, support from family, peers, and the surrounding social environment acts as a protective factor that can reduce anxiety and enhance students' self-confidence in preparing for the workforce.

The findings are also in line with previous studies conducted by Mora et al. (on final-year pharmacy students, which identified a negative relationship between social support and anxiety. Similarly, Santo & Alfian (reported comparable results. The consistency of these findings demonstrates that social support consistently plays an important role in reducing anxiety among students undergoing the

transition from academic life to employment. Nevertheless, this study produced a stronger correlation coefficient compared to the findings of Mora. The difference in the strength of the relationship may be influenced by variations in participant characteristics, academic contexts, and social environments. Psychology students may possess greater awareness and understanding of mental health issues and the importance of emotional support compared to students from other academic disciplines, which may strengthen the influence of social support on their psychological well-being.

Furthermore, the absence of respondents with low levels of social support indicates that most students perceived their social environment as sufficiently supportive. This condition may explain why the majority of respondents were categorized as experiencing moderate to low levels of anxiety. These findings suggest that positive social relationships can help students manage psychological pressure more adaptively. Social support not only functions as a source of emotional comfort but also assists students in obtaining information, motivation, and reassurance when facing future career challenges.

According to (Purwaningsih et al., 2023) Anxiety is an emotional condition characterized by physical tension, worry, and negative thoughts regarding possible adverse outcomes. Among final-year students, anxiety about entering the workforce is considered a natural response due to changes in roles and responsibilities after graduation. However, if not managed properly, anxiety may negatively affect students' work readiness, academic performance, and mental health. Therefore, social support becomes essential as a form of psychological protection that helps students maintain emotional stability during this transitional period.

The contribution of this study highlights that social support is an important factor that should be considered in efforts to maintain the mental well-being of final-year students. Practically, these findings may serve as a reference for higher education institutions in developing psychological assistance programs, career counseling services, and peer-support activities to help students prepare for the workforce. In addition, families and social environments should actively provide emotional encouragement, motivation, and positive communication to strengthen students' confidence and readiness in facing their future careers.

5. CONCLUSION

This study found a significant negative relationship between social support and anxiety in facing the workforce among final-year students of the Faculty of Psychology at Universitas Prima Indonesia. The findings indicate that students who receive higher levels of social support from family, peers, and the academic environment tend to experience lower levels of anxiety during the transition from higher education to professional employment. These results support career development theory, which explains that final-year students are in the career implementation stage, a phase often characterized by psychological pressure and uncertainty regarding the future.

Based on the findings, final-year students are encouraged to build positive social relationships and actively seek support from their surrounding environment to reduce anxiety when facing the workforce. Universities are also recommended to provide career counseling services, career readiness training, and mentoring programs to support students during the transition period. Future studies are suggested to involve more diverse samples and include additional variables, such as self-efficacy, career adaptability, and coping strategies, in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of anxiety in facing the workforce among university students.

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