

# The Relationship Between Self-Efficacy And Anxiety In Job Seekers With Fresh Graduates Of The Toba Batak Tribe In Medan City

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the relationship between self-efficacy and anxiety among job seekers with the status of fresh graduates of the Toba Batak tribe in Medan City. 1. The results of the correlation analysis indicate a significant relationship between self-efficacy and anxiety in fresh graduates of the Toba Batak tribe in Medan City, with a value of  $r = 0.394$  and a significance level of  $p = 0.000$  ( $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, the research hypothesis is accepted. The relationship obtained is positive, meaning that the higher the individual's self-efficacy, the higher the anxiety experienced. This phenomenon shows that although fresh graduates feel confident in their abilities, high expectations from the Batak social and cultural environment that emphasize success can trigger anxiety. 2. Descriptive analysis shows that the empirical mean of the self-efficacy variable (45) is higher than the hypothetical mean (36). This illustrates that the level of self-efficacy of fresh graduates of the Toba Batak tribe is in the moderate to high category. Meanwhile, for the anxiety variable, the empirical mean (60) is also greater than the hypothetical mean (48), which means that fresh graduate anxiety is in the moderate to high category.

**Keywords:** Self-Efficacy, Anxiety, Work of Fresh Graduates



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## INTRODUCTION

Amidst intense global competition and high social expectations, new graduates face a transition period filled with uncertainty and psychological stress. Every year, thousands of college graduates in Indonesia enter the job market, competing for jobs that match their educational background and skills. The transition from education to work is a crucial phase in a person's life, known as the transition to early adulthood. Individuals in this phase are referred to as fresh graduates, who have recently completed higher education and are preparing to enter the workforce (Sun et al., 2022).

Fresh graduates are individuals who have just completed higher education and are in a crucial transition phase into the professional world. This period is marked by various challenges, such as finding a job, adjusting to environmental expectations, and beginning to assume personal and social responsibilities. It's not uncommon for fresh graduates to experience anxiety due to the pressure to find work immediately, especially in large cities like Medan, which face high job competition. When expectations aren't immediately met, anxiety can increase, affecting their psychological well-being and readiness to face future life challenges (Perdana & Wijaya, 2021).

Based on population census data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2010, the number of Batak people in Indonesia reached 8,446,969. Furthermore, according to 2024 BPS data, the Batak people ranked first as the ethnic group with the highest number of bachelor's degree graduates in Indonesia, at 18.02%. This

indicates that the Batak people place a high emphasis on higher education. However, this high number of graduates also increases competition for jobs, especially in urban areas like Medan. As a result, many fresh graduates experience anxiety. Anxiety about facing the world of work is a common challenge experienced by many fresh graduates, including those from the Toba Batak ethnic group in Medan (Amalia & Nashori, 2021).

In the Toba Batak community, particularly in Medan, this transition period has its own unique dynamics. Toba Batak culture upholds the values of hamoraon (wealth), hasangapon (honor), and hagabeon (descent), which are often expressed through educational attainment and success in the workplace. While these values can be motivating, in certain situations they can create psychological burdens, particularly for recent graduates who often face pressure to quickly find decent employment to repay their parents, support their younger siblings, and uphold the family's reputation. The inability to quickly find employment can create a sense of failure and threaten an individual's social identity within their community (Leary & Sherlock, 2020).

A distinctive characteristic of the Toba Batak people that distinguishes them from other ethnic groups is the strong influence of their cultural value system in determining social identity. According to Simanjuntak (Erliana & Rozana, 2022) Batak people have close social ties and a strong kinship structure (marga), so that individual achievements are often seen as a representation of the success of the extended family. Unlike some other ethnic groups that emphasize individual achievement, the Toba Batak people place educational and occupational attainment as evidence of collective success. Therefore, failure to obtain employment is not only a personal burden but also considered to tarnish the dignity of the extended family. These expectations make the transition to the workforce more stressful for Toba Batak fresh graduates compared to other ethnic groups. This is also emphasized by Pasaribu (2018), who stated that in Batak culture, a family's social status is largely determined by the educational and economic success of its children, so the pressure to succeed is often passed down through generations (Setyawan et al., 2022).

The theory proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (Hadi, 2019) also strengthens the understanding of the emergence of anxiety, namely when individuals perceive that environmental demands exceed their resources or capacities. For fresh graduates of the Toba Batak ethnic group, social pressures and high cultural and family expectations for academic and career achievement can create significant psychological stress.

Unemployed fresh graduates often feel stressed, fear failure, and experience excessive anxiety. Social comparisons with employed peers exacerbate this situation. The impact is not only emotional but also affects decision-making, motivation to seek employment, and the quality of social relationships. Psychological theory provides a crucial foundation for explaining how individuals respond to these pressures, including the concept of self-efficacy (Kassabry, 2023).

Self-efficacy, according to Bandura (Yerdelen et al., 2019) is a person's belief in their ability to design and execute actions to achieve specific goals. Individuals with high self-efficacy are confident in facing challenges, more resilient to failure, and better able to manage stress and anxiety. Conversely, individuals with low self-efficacy tend to feel helpless, give up easily, and avoid challenging situations. In the context of job searching, high self-efficacy can encourage individuals to be more active, confident, and resilient in the face of selection processes and temporary setbacks.

Previous research has shown that self-efficacy plays a significant role in reducing anxiety levels. Rahmawati and Yuliana (Jayadi et al., 2022) found that final-year students with high self-efficacy tended to experience lower job anxiety. Similar findings were also presented by Wahyuni, Hamid, and Firdaus (Findriyani & Parmin, 2021) who stated that self-efficacy plays a role in increasing readiness for the workplace and reducing anxiety.

Career anxiety. In Toba Batak culture, which emphasizes success as a symbol of family honor and self-respect, strong self-efficacy is essential to prevent individuals from succumbing to high external pressures.

According to Albert Bandura (PUTRA, 2022) self-confidence or self-efficacy plays a crucial role in influencing how a person thinks, feels, and acts when facing challenging situations. Bandura stated that individuals with high levels of self-efficacy tend to be more confident in overcoming obstacles, including social pressure and anxiety related to job uncertainty. Conversely, those with low self-efficacy often feel incapable of overcoming challenges, making them more susceptible to stress and anxiety. Luthans (Siregar et al., 2024) also emphasized that self-efficacy plays a crucial role in regulating emotions and stress, particularly in challenging situations such as the transition from education to work (Graham & Bonner, 2022).

Research by Wahyuni, Hamid, and Firdaus (Ren & Sun, 2023) supports the importance of self-efficacy in reducing anxiety in the workplace. A study of 427 final-year college students in Makassar City found a negative relationship between self-efficacy and anxiety. Individuals with high self-efficacy tended to experience lower anxiety when faced with the challenges of entering the workforce. These findings suggest that confidence in one's abilities is an important protective factor in managing psychological stress during the transition to the professional world.



**Figure 1. Self-efficacy survey data with anxiety in job seekers with fresh graduate status of the Toba Batak tribe in the city of Medan.**

Based on the pre-survey results presented in Table 1.1, the majority of fresh graduates in the study sample exhibited high levels of anxiety during the job search process. This is reflected in the high percentage of respondents who answered "YES" to statements indicating symptoms of anxiety. For example, in the first statement, "I often feel excessively worried about my ability to compete in the job market," 88.5% of respondents reported experiencing such anxiety. In the second statement, "I often doubt my abilities and skills to find a job that matches my qualifications," 80.8% of respondents admitted to doubting their own capacity (Rakoczy et al., 2019).

Furthermore, in the third statement, "I feel afraid or anxious when I have to face the selection process and job interviews," 73.1% of respondents indicated a high level of anxiety. In the fourth statement, "Worries about getting a job often interfere with my daily activities," 69.2% of respondents admitted that their anxiety impacted their daily lives. Meanwhile, in the fifth statement, "I feel anxious when my friends are already working while I am not," 88.5% of respondents felt left behind and anxious due to social pressure from their peers. These findings indicate that anxiety in facing the world of work is a common experience for fresh graduates, and self-efficacy (confidence in one's abilities) plays a significant role in influencing this level of anxiety. Furthermore, low self-efficacy can increase anxiety due to a lack of confidence in one's skills and knowledge (Kavle et al., 2019).

According to Bandura (Ismayilova & M.Klassen, 2019) self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their ability to plan and take steps to achieve goals or overcome obstacles. This belief influences how a person thinks, feels, and acts in various situations, including when facing challenges in finding a job. For fresh graduates, especially amidst intense competition and high social expectations, self-efficacy levels can determine whether they are able to face the transition to the workforce with optimism or anxiety. Individuals with high levels of self-efficacy tend to have greater self-confidence, resilience, and are more resilient to pressure and stress, thus being better prepared for the job selection process. Conversely, individuals with low

self-efficacy are more prone to anxiety due to feelings of insufficient competence and tend to give up when faced with obstacles.

Bandura (Pasyola et al., 2021) explains that self-efficacy is formed from three main aspects. First, magnitude, which is the level of difficulty of the task an individual believes they can complete, ranging from simple to complex. Second, generality, which is the extent to which this self-belief applies across various contexts or situations. Third, strength, which is the intensity or strength of an individual's belief in their abilities. The stronger this belief, the more likely an individual is to persist in facing challenges, even if they experience failure. Self-efficacy acts as a psychological barrier that helps individuals remain calm and focused in the face of difficult situations. Paembonan (Mafaza et al., 2018a) states that individuals with high self-efficacy tend to view failure as an opportunity for learning and growth, rather than as a threat to self-esteem. Conversely, low self-efficacy can increase the fear of failure and exacerbate anxiety, especially in competitive situations such as job searches (Mata, 2020).

Based on this phenomenon, researchers are interested in further investigating whether there is a true relationship between the level of self-efficacy and anxiety in job searches, especially among fresh graduates from (Hardyanti et al., 2017).

The Toba Batak people in Medan City were selected based on their unique cultural context, such as high family expectations and specific social norms, which are believed to influence the psychological dynamics of individuals transitioning to the workforce.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The approach used in this research is a quantitative correlational method. According to Sugiyono (Mafaza et al., 2018b) a quantitative method is a research approach that aims to identify causal relationships between predetermined variables. This approach also allows researchers to measure the extent of the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable (Wilkerson et al., 2023). Data collection was conducted using standardized instruments, while hypothesis testing was conducted through statistical analysis techniques. Furthermore, validity and reliability tests were applied to ensure that the instruments used had adequate levels of reliability and accuracy. In this study, the subjects selected were fresh graduates from the Toba Batak tribe and Population refers to a generalizable area, consisting of objects or subjects that have certain qualities and characteristics, which are determined by the researcher to be studied and drawn conclusions (Sugiyono, 2013). In this study, the population to be studied is fresh graduates of the Toba Batak tribe in Medan City. According to BPS data in 2010, the number of Batak people in Indonesia was 8,446,969 (census: 2010). Based on BPS data in 2024, the Toba Batak tribe was ranked first with the most bachelor's graduates, namely 18.02% (Kumar, 2019)..

The selection of the 22–25 age range is based on the stages of career development described by Ginzberg (Novena & Kriswandani, 2018), which state that more stable and focused career decisions generally begin to emerge in mid- to late-emerging adulthood. Therefore, this age range is considered relevant for researching fresh graduates facing the transition from education to the workforce.

In this study, the target population was fresh graduates of the Toba Batak ethnic group aged 22 to 25 who had recently completed a bachelor's or diploma degree within the last 1–2 years. They were required to reside in Medan and not yet have a permanent job at the time of the study.

In conducting research, many limitations will be experienced. Especially if the research has a large population. Sugiono (Titi & Sari, 2021) explains that due to limitations that will be experienced in terms of funding, personnel or time, especially when the population is large, it is necessary to search for samples, namely part of the population to represent the number and characteristics for the research. Because the sample will be used to draw conclusions, the sample selection must be truly representative. The sample used for the research was fresh graduates of the Batak tribe in Medan City. To determine the number of samples needed, the researcher conducted an analysis using A Priori power analysis to determine the number of samples needed using the G \* power application version 3.1.9.7.

To obtain data, it is necessary to use an instrument to draw conclusions. Because a measurement scale will be used to generate accurate data and results, the instrument must use a measurement scale. In this study, the measurement scale used is the Likert scale, which functions to measure a person's attitude or opinion regarding a particular social phenomenon (Parkhouse et al., 2022). In this scale, respondents will be asked to

choose the item that best suits them. This study will use two measurement scales: the self-efficacy scale and the fresh graduate anxiety scale. For data collection, questionnaires will be distributed both online and in person (Sari & Listiadi, 2021).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter will describe the results of data analysis conducted on respondents, namely *fresh graduates* of the Toba Batak ethnic group in Medan. The results of the overall data processing obtained were used to analyze the relationship between *self-efficacy* and anxiety of *fresh graduates* of the Toba Batak ethnic group in Medan.

### Research Subject Overview

This study included 108 Toba Batak *fresh graduates* in Medan. The researchers categorized each *fresh graduate* respondent based on gender, age, graduation year, university of origin, final level of education, study program/major, and number of job applications since graduation.

### Respondent Description Based on Gender

Based on Table it can be seen that the largest sample in this study was male, namely 55 people (50.9%), and the research subjects were female, namely 53 people (49.1%). This distribution can be seen in the following table.

**Table 1. Distribution of Subjects by Gender**

| No | Gender       | Frequency         | Presentation |
|----|--------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 1  | Man          | 55 people         | 50.9%        |
| 2  | Woman        | 53 people         | 49.1%        |
|    | <b>Total</b> | <b>108 people</b> | <b>100%</b>  |

### Hypothesis Testing

The purpose of conducting a hypothesis test is to determine whether the research hypothesis is accepted or rejected. In this study, the hypothesis test was conducted using *Pearson Product Moment Correlation* using SPSS 27.0 for Windows. If the data meets the assumptions of normality and linearity, the correlation test used is Pearson Product Moment (Sugiyono, 2017). *Pearson correlation* is part of parametric statistics, so this correlation analysis requires the assumption of a linear relationship between the research variables. The results of this research's hypothesis test can be seen in the table below:

**Table 2. Hypothesis Test Results**

| Variables            | <i>Spearman Correlation</i> | Sig (2-tailed) | N   |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|-----|
| <i>Self-efficacy</i> | 0.394                       | 0,000          | 108 |
| Anxiety              |                             |                |     |

From the results of the hypothesis test analysis, the significance value is 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ) which means  $H_a$  is accepted and  $H_o$  is rejected, namely there is a significant relationship between *self-efficacy* and anxiety in *fresh graduates* of the Batak Toba tribe in Medan City. The table above shows a correlation coefficient = 0.394 which indicates that the correlation coefficient number in the results is positive, namely 0.394, so the relationship between the two variables is unidirectional (type of unidirectional relationship). Thus, it can be interpreted that the higher the *self-efficacy* owned, the higher the anxiety experienced, and vice versa. Then, the correlation value of 0.394 also shows that the results of these two variables are in the low category (Fields et al., 2023).

### Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between *self-efficacy* and anxiety in job seekers with the status of *fresh graduates* of the Batak Toba tribe in Medan City. The respondents of this study numbered 108 people. Based on the results of the hypothesis test using *Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis*, a correlation coefficient value of 0.394 was obtained with a significance value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ).

These results indicate that there is a significant positive relationship between *self-efficacy* and anxiety in *fresh graduates* of the Batak Toba tribe in Medan City, so the research hypothesis is accepted (Nwaukwa & Okolocha, 2020).

The results of this study indicate a positive relationship between *self-efficacy* and anxiety in *fresh graduates* of the Toba Batak tribe in Medan. This means that the higher an individual's *self-efficacy*, the higher their perceived anxiety level. This finding differs from Bandura's (1997) opinion, which states that *self-efficacy* functions as a protective factor, as self-confidence can increase control over stressful situations and reduce anxiety.

Individuals with high *self-efficacy* tend to set excessive standards for themselves of success (Susanti et al., 2022). However, when social realities do not align with these standards—for example, difficulty finding employment, high competition, or limited opportunities—these conditions can cause psychological stress that leads to anxiety (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This stress is even stronger in the context of Toba Batak culture, which emphasizes work achievement as a measure of social success (Siahaan, 2013).

Therefore, the results of this study reveal a new dynamic that is not entirely in line with previous research, which generally found a negative relationship between the two variables. For example, Elfina & Andriany's (2023) study found that *career self-efficacy* was negatively related to *future career anxiety* in Indonesian *fresh graduates* during the pandemic, while Fitriyani et al. (Rahman et al., 2024) demonstrated that *self-efficacy* increases *job readiness*, thereby reducing anxiety about entering the workforce. Similarly, Nurudin & Amawidyati (K Parangin-Angin, 2022) both found that *self-efficacy* functions as a protective factor in suppressing both competitive and test anxiety.

These differences in results suggest that the direction of the relationship between *self-efficacy* and anxiety is not universal, but is strongly influenced by social and cultural contexts. For example, research by Xiang et al. (Andaru, 2019) suggests that within the context of certain sporting experiences, *self-efficacy* can be positively related to anxiety, as the more confident a person is in their abilities, the higher the achievement standards they set, which in turn leads to psychological distress. Similarly, Suryaningrum (2018) found that in *collectivist cultures*, the relationship between *self-efficacy* and social anxiety is moderated by cultural factors, allowing individuals with high *self-efficacy* to still experience anxiety due to strong social demands. Thus, these research findings demonstrate that *self-efficacy* can play a dual role: as a protective factor and as a trigger for anxiety, depending on the context.

Within Bandura's (1997) theoretical framework, *self-efficacy* is an individual's belief in their ability to organize and execute the actions necessary to achieve a specific outcome. Bandura emphasized that *self-efficacy* typically plays a positive role because it increases an individual's sense of control over stressful situations. However, Bandura also acknowledged that *self-efficacy* can cause psychological distress when the demands of the situation exceed an individual's resources. This aligns with Lazarus & Folkman's (1984) stress theory, which explains that anxiety arises when environmental demands are perceived to exceed an individual's coping abilities. In Batak Toba *fresh graduates*, *high self-efficacy* actually increases the perception of demands because individuals feel compelled to prove their abilities, while social realities such as job competition, limited employment opportunities, and family expectations make them vulnerable to feeling overwhelmed (Podungge et al., 2023).

This situation becomes even more complex when viewed from the perspective of Toba Batak culture, which emphasizes *hamoraon* (wealth), *hasangapon* (honor), and *hagabeon* (descent/family). Successful employment is seen not only as an individual achievement but also as a symbol of family and clan success (Siahaan, 2013). This cultural factor may explain why high *self-efficacy* is often accompanied by anxiety.

This explanation is also in line with Greenberger & Padesky's (2004) anxiety theory, which states that anxiety arises when there is a gap between expectations and reality. Batak Toba *fresh graduates with high self-efficacy* set high standards for success, but when the reality of the job search does not match expectations, anxiety arises. From a Freudian psychoanalytic perspective, anxiety in this context can also be understood as a conflict between *the ego* and *the superego*. *The ego*, which represents *self-efficacy*, feels capable, but the *superego*, influenced by Batak cultural norms, places strong moral demands. As a result, despite high *self-efficacy*, individuals still experience anxiety due to the fear of failing to meet the demands of the collective *superego*, which includes family and clan expectations (Siddiq & Suhana, 2023).

Based on the categorization analysis, it was found that the majority of respondents were in the moderate category for both *self-efficacy* and anxiety variables. For *self-efficacy*, 61.1% of respondents were in the moderate category for *the magnitude* and *generality aspects*, and 64.8% for the *strength aspect*. For the anxiety variable, the majority were also in the moderate category, indicating that their anxiety levels were not extreme. This illustrates that Batak Toba *fresh graduates* have quite good self-confidence, but at the same time also experience moderate anxiety. This condition illustrates a fragile balance; *self-efficacy* gives them the drive to strive, but anxiety arises as a consequence of high social expectations. This finding strengthens the view that the relationship between *self-efficacy* and anxiety is strongly influenced by the socio-cultural context, not just a universal linear relationship (Yolcu & Sari, 2018).

This finding is also consistent with the initial research findings. Toba Batak *fresh graduates* expressed confidence in finding work, but simultaneously felt significant pressure from family and society. The difference between the research findings and the initial findings lies in the level of objectivity of the measurements. The psychological instruments used in this study provided a comprehensive picture of the respondents' conditions, while the initial findings only reflected subjective perceptions influenced by emotions and immediate circumstances. (Violinda, et al., 2023).

From the results of this study, it can be concluded that *self-efficacy* has a significant positive relationship with anxiety, with a low correlation ( $r = 0.394$ ). This finding confirms that although *self-efficacy* is usually considered a protective factor against anxiety, in the context of Toba Batak culture can actually increase anxiety due to high expectations from family and society.

Practically, the results of this study imply the need for intervention programs that focus not only on increasing self-efficacy for fresh graduates but also on anxiety management and coping strategies. Campuses can facilitate soft skills training, career counseling, and stress management workshops. Meanwhile, Toba Batak families are expected to provide realistic support, not just in the form of demands, but also empathy and emotional reinforcement (Modarres et al., 2022). Thus, high self-efficacy can develop into positive motivation without causing excessive anxiety

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research that has been conducted with the title The Relationship between Self-Efficacy and Anxiety in Job Seekers with Fresh Graduate Status of the Toba Batak Tribe in Medan City, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The results of the correlation analysis indicate a significant relationship between self-efficacy and anxiety in fresh graduates of the Toba Batak tribe in Medan City, with a value of  $r = 0.394$  and a significance level of  $p = 0.000$  ( $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, the research hypothesis is accepted. The relationship obtained is positive, meaning that the higher the individual's self-efficacy, the higher the anxiety experienced. This phenomenon shows that although fresh graduates feel confident in their abilities, high expectations from the Batak social and cultural environment that emphasize success can trigger anxiety.
2. Descriptive analysis shows that the empirical mean of the self-efficacy variable (45) is higher than the hypothetical mean (36). This illustrates that the self-efficacy level of Batak Toba fresh graduates is in the moderate to high category. Meanwhile, in the anxiety variable, the empirical mean (60) is also greater than the hypothetical mean (48), which means that the anxiety of fresh graduates is in the moderate to high category.
3. Score categorization shows that most respondents are in the moderate category for both self-efficacy and anxiety. In terms of self-efficacy, the majority of respondents are in the moderate category (61.1% in magnitude, 61.1% in generality, and 64.8% in strength). For the anxiety variable, similar results were found, with the majority in the moderate category. This indicates that although fresh graduates have fairly good self-confidence, they still experience moderate levels of anxiety when facing the demands and competition of entering the workforce.

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