



THE INFLUENCE OF CAREER ANXIETY AND DIGITAL SKILLS ON WORK READINESS OF MANAGEMENT STUDENTS OF SILIWANGI UNIVERSITY CLASS OF 2022

Andhika Salman Fadhilah^{1*}, Fanisa Maulida²

^{1,2}Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Siliwangi, Tasikmalaya, Indonesia

^{*}andhikasalmanfdh@gmail.com

Abstract. Entering the era of Industrial Revolution 4.0, work readiness has become key for university graduates. However, final-year students often face challenges such as career anxiety and the demand for digital skills proficiency. This study aims to analyze the influence of career anxiety and digital skills on the work readiness of the Students of the Management Study Program, Siliwangi University, Class of 2022. This research utilized a quantitative approach with a verificative survey method. The sample consisted of 83 students selected through purposive sampling. Data analysis was performed using multiple linear regression. The results revealed that: (1) career anxiety does not have a significant influence on work readiness; (2) digital skills were proven to have a significant positive influence on work readiness. Simultaneously, both variables explained 52.6% of the variance in work readiness. These findings affirm that digital skills development should be a primary curriculum priority to enhance graduate work readiness, supported by career guidance services to manage student anxiety.

Keywords: Work Readiness; Career Anxiety; Digital Skills; Management Students.

1. Introduction

The Industrial Revolution 4.0 and digital transformation have resulted in major changes in the global employment landscape, creating significant challenges for the employability of college graduates. According to a report from The Future of Jobs Report 2025, by 2030 there will be a net increase of 78 million jobs with the creation of 170 million new jobs and the displacement of 92 million jobs (World Economic Forum, 2025). This transition indicates that the digital skills gap is widening as employers prioritize digital skills across various professions. This phenomenon is supported by previous research that shows a skills mismatch between graduates abilities and industry needs. Tushar & Sooraksa (2023) found that the skills gap is a global concern, these skills are in problem-solving, teamwork, and communication. Van Laar et al. (2020) shows that digital skills are crucial to support employability skills, particularly in communication, problem-solving, and collaboration, which are crucial in this era.

In Indonesia, the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) recorded that the Open Unemployment Rate (TPT) in February 2025 reached 4.76% (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2025a). The unemployment rate among university graduates in 2024 reached 5.25%, which is higher than the national average (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2025b). This condition indicates a significant gap between the skills possessed by graduates and the needs of the labor market. This phenomenon is also supported by a preliminary survey conducted by 22 seventh-semester students at Siliwangi University. The survey showed that 90.9% of respondents felt anxious about their career prospects after graduation, 59.1% felt unprepared to face job competition, and 63.6% were worried about not finding jobs that suited their majors. 86.4% respondents stated they had mastered basic digital skills, but only 59.1% considered their digital skills to be in line with the needs of the professional

world. (Fadhilah & Maulida, 2025). This data shows that work readiness is influenced not only by technical abilities but also by psychological factors such as career anxiety.

Theoretically, work readiness is the mastery of technical and non-technical skills and professional attitudes required by industry. In the Indonesian context, there are limited studies that simultaneously examine the influence of career anxiety and digital skills on the work readiness of management students in a university environment. This research gap arises from indications that current university curricula do not fully integrate the digital competencies required by the modern job market, and university-industry collaboration to provide practical experience is still suboptimal. This situation contributes to the existing skills gap, making this research crucial to investigate.

Based on the theoretical framework and findings from previous research, the research hypotheses can be formulated as follows:

H₁: Career anxiety has a negatif and significant effect on student work readiness.

H₂: Digital skills have a positif and significant effect on student work readiness.

This research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the study of work readiness development and practical implications for higher education institutions in designing career development strategies and strengthening digital skills to prepare competitive graduates for the modern job market. Managerially, the findings of this research are very relevant for higher education institutions. The results of this study can be used as a basis for changing the curriculum to be more oriented towards the integration of digital competencies and strengthening the career service unit (Career Center) in mitigating students' career anxiety, so as to practically increase the competitiveness of graduates.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Framework

This study uses two main theories to build a theoretical framework that connects the research variables, namely Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) and Human Capital Theory (HCT).

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), developed by Lent et al., (1994), used as a theoretical basis for analyzing the Career Anxiety variable. SCCT focuses on how socio-cognitive factors (such as self-efficacy and outcome expectations) influence an individual's career interests, choices, and performance. In the context of this study, Career Anxiety can be considered a variable that hinders self-efficacy and positive outcome expectations. High levels of career anxiety (e.g., doubts about job prospects) tend to reduce individuals' confidence in carrying out the tasks required in their career preparation. Ultimately, this can impact their Work Readiness.

Human Capital Theory (HCT), pioneered by Becker, (1993), used as the theoretical basis for analyzing the Digital Skills variable. HCT states that increasing an individual's productivity in the labor market is influenced by investment in an individual's education, training and mastery of skills. In the context of the digital era, Digital Skills are considered a crucial investment in human capital. Mastery of high-level digital skills (such as information literacy, digital communication, and technology-based problem solving) is an asset that increases the market value of graduates, thus having a positive impact on their work readiness.

2.2. Work Readiness

Work readiness is a condition in which an individual is ready to enter the world of work through mastering technical and non-technical skills and having a professional attitude. In the digital age, work readiness can include digital literacy skills, adaptability to technological change, and the ability to make effective career transitions. (Potgieter et al., 2023)

2.3. Career Anxiety

Career anxiety can be defined as a feeling of worry or uncertainty that arises in an individual regarding their career planning and transitions. Although this anxiety has the potential to hinder career decision-making, previous research has shown mixed results, with moderate anxiety actually serving as a motivator for higher levels of career preparation behavior. (Carkit, 2025)

2.4. Digital Skills

Digital skills can be defined as the ability and knowledge to use, understand, and manage digital technology effectively and safely. It should not only cover technical skills, but also include other aspects such as critical thinking and problem solving. According to (Audrin et al., 2024), digital skills are a core competency essential in the 21st century because they determine graduates' competitiveness. Van Laar et al. (2020) categorize digital skills into six main dimensions: information literacy, digital communication, digital content creation, digital safety, and technology-based problem-solving. Mastery of these skills is highly correlated with industry demand.

2.5. Prior Findings Research

Several previous studies have yielded mixed findings regarding the factors that influence work readiness. Succi & Canovi (2020) emphasized that soft skills are a key factor in students employability in Europe, but this study did not consider psychological factors such as career anxiety in their research. Potgieter et al. (2023) emphasizes that digital competence is very important for professional work readiness, but researchers did not research it in the context of students. Meanwhile, according to Agussalim et al. (2024) Entrepreneurial mindset and social background are factors that influence digital work readiness in vocational students, but not in management students at general university. This indicates that there are still limited studies that simultaneously examine the influence of career anxiety and digital skills on the work readiness of management students in Indonesia, especially in non-vocational university environment.

Based on the elaborated literature review, the researchers developed a conceptual framework illustrating the influence of career anxiety and digital skills on student work readiness, a presented in the figure below:

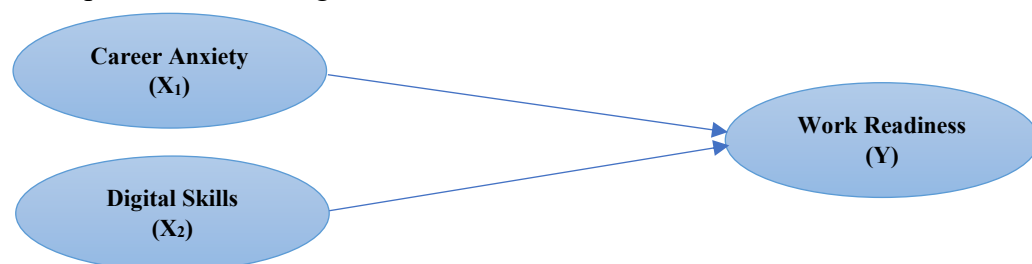


Fig 1. Research model

3. Methods

3.1. Research Design

This study employs a quantitative approach using the survey method and a verificative research type, which is a study aiming to test the truth of hypotheses regarding the influence of career anxiety and digital skills on work readiness.

3.2. Analysis Technique

The data analysis technique employed multiple linear regression using the model:

$$Y = a + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon$$

Where:

- **Y** = Work Readiness
- **X₁** = Career Anxiety
- **X₂** = Digital Skills
- **a** = Constant
- **β₁, β₂** = Regression Coefficients
- **ε** = Error Term

Prior to the regression analysis, several preliminary tests were conducted. These included instrument tests (validity and reliability tests) and classical assumption tests (normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity). Hypothesis testing was subsequently performed using the t-test (partial test), the F-test (simultaneous test), and the coefficient of determination (R^2). All data processing was carried out using SPSS version 20 with a 5% significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$).

3.3. Population and Sample

The research population consists of all seventh-semester students in the Management Study Program, Class of 2022, at Siliwangi University, totaling 353 individuals. The sample was determined using a purposive sampling technique with the criterion being seventh-semester students. The sample size was calculated using the Slovin formula with a 10% margin of error:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} = \frac{353}{1 + 353(0,10)^2} = 78 \text{ Respondent}$$

In this study, data was successfully collected from **83 respondents**, exceeding the minimum required sample size.

3.4. Data Collection

Data collection was facilitated through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Form, which comprised closed-ended questions. These questions were drawn from relevant theories and previous research, adapted to align with the specific content and scope of this research. The questionnaire was structured into four sections as the following:

- 1) **Section 1:** General information about the respondents (Respondent Profile).
- 2) **Section 2:** Work Readiness (11 items). Adaptation from Potgieter et al. (2023); Succi & Canovi (2020) (e.g., "I am confident in answering job interview questions.")

- 3) **Section 3:** Career Anxiety (6 items). Adaptation From Carkit (2025) (e.g., "I feel very anxious about not getting a job immediately after graduation.")
- 4) **Section 4:** Digital Skills (12 items). Adaptation from Van Laar et al. (2020) (e.g., "I feel very anxious about not getting a job immediately after graduation.")

The Likert Scale was employed for Sections 2, 3, and 4, utilizing five levels: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree.

4. Result & Discussion

In this study there were 83 respondents involved with the following characteristics: based on gender, 65.1% were female and 34.9% were male; based on age, 83.1% were aged 21-22 years; based on concentration, 47% were from Human Resource Management, 30.1% Financial Management, 14.5% Operational Management, and 8.4% Marketing Management; and 77.1% had prior work or internship experience.

Table 1. Instrument Validity and Reliability test

Variabel	Total item	Calculated r Range	Cronbach's Alpha	Status
Career Anxiety (X ₁)	6	0.400-0.711	0.884	Valid & Reliable
Digital Skills (X ₂)	12	0.717-0.840	0.938	Valid & Reliable
Work Readines (Y)	11	0.671-0.816	0.913	Valid & Reliable

Source: Researcher's Processed Data, SPSS Output (2025)

The validity test results showed that all items had a calculated $r_{\text{value}} > r_{\text{table}}$ (0.216), with Sig. < 0.05. The reliability test showed that all variables had a Cronbach's Alpha > 0.60.

Table 2. Classical Assumption Test

Classical Assumption Test	Variable	Statistic Value	Rule of Thumb	Result
Normality Test	Residual (K-S Test)	Sig. = 0.083	Sig. > 0.05	Normal
Multicollinearity Test	Career Anxiety	VIF = 1.058	VIF < 10	No Multicollinearity
	Digital Skills	VIF = 1.058	VIF < 10	No Multicollinearity
Heteroscedasticity Test	Career Anxiety	Sig. = 0.558	Sig. > 0.05	No Heteroscedasticity
	Digital Skills	Sig. = 0.106	Sig. > 0.05	No Heteroscedasticity

Source: Researcher's Processed Data, SPSS Output (2025)

Based on table 2, the Classical Assumption Test was conducted to ensure the linear regression model used was the Best Linear Unbiased Estimator (BLUE). The results of the Normality Test using Kolmogorov-Smirnov (Sig. 0.083 > 0.05) show that the residuals are normally distributed. Furthermore, the Multicollinearity Test for both independent variables (Career Anxiety and Digital Skills) show a Tolerance value (0.946 > 0.10) and a VIF value (1.058 < 10). This VIF value close to 1 shows strong empirical evidence that there is no excessive correlation between the independent variables. Therefore, the two variables are independent of each other and can be tested validly in the model. Finally, the Heteroscedasticity Test (Glejser Test) shows that the significance

value for Career Anxiety (0.558) and Digital Skills (0.106) is both greater than 0.05, so the homoscedasticity assumption has been met.

Table 3. Regression Analysis, t-test, F-test, and Coefficient of Determination Results

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig. t	F	Sig. F	Adj. R ²
(Constant)	13.524	3.62		3.736	0.000	46.492	0.000	0.526
Career Anxiety	-0.182	0.109	-0.131	-1.678	0.097			
Digital Skills	0.684	0.071	0.753	9.625	0.000			

Source: Researcher's Processed Data, SPSS Output (2025)

The resulting regression equation: $Y = 13.524 - 0.182X_1 + 0.684X_2$

The results of the study indicate that career anxiety has a negative effect ($\beta = -0.182$) on work readiness but is not significant ($\text{Sig.} 0.097 > 0.05$). In contrast, digital skills have a positive effect ($\beta = 0.753$) and significant effect ($\text{Sig.} 0.000 < 0.05$), with a coefficient indicating a large influence on work readiness. Furthermore, the F-test results show a significance value of $0.00 < 0.05$ and a calculated F_{value} of 46.492 which is greater than the F_{table} value of 3.11. This indicates that career anxiety and digital skills simultaneously have a significant influence on work readiness. The Adjusted R^2 value of 0.526 means that 52.6% of the variance in work readiness can be explained by the career anxiety and digital skills variables, while 47.4% is influenced by other factors unrelated to the research model.

The findings of this study indicate that career anxiety does not have a significant impact on work readiness. Although this negative relationship is in line with Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent et al., 1994), which explains that psychological factors like career anxiety can lower self-efficacy (self-confidence), and low self-efficacy can hinder individuals in making career decisions and preparing for the world of work, the findings of this study also support research conducted by (Carkit, 2025). Carkit's study shows that the relationship between career anxiety and career optimism is very complex and this relationship can be mediated by many other factors such as job search support and career self-efficacy. In addition, Kim et al. (2022) also found a similar result that job-seeking anxiety can function as a driver to motivate better job preparation behavior.

The fact that career anxiety does not significantly impact work readiness can be explained by several reasons. First, it is very likely that students have developed good coping strategies to control their anxiety. This is also supported by a study by Alnajjar & Abou Hashish (2024) which found that skills training and career counseling can increase self-confidence and help facilitate career decision-making. Second, career anxiety may only impact certain aspects of work readiness because work readiness has many dimensions. Third, external factors such as family support and career development programs at university can act as buffers in the relationship between anxiety and work readiness (Zhao, 2023). Fourth, the fact that 77.1% of respondents had work or internship experience indicates that such experience has helped improve their work readiness, regardless of the level of anxiety they felt. This phenomenon aligns with the principles of Human Capital Theory.

Conversely, digital skills have been shown to have a significant and dominant influence on work readiness. The results of this study are consistent and can strengthen

the research of Kholifah et al. (2025), which found that digital employability skills significantly influence workforce readiness in the Industry 4.0 era. In addition, Potgieter et al. (2023) found a strong correlation between students' digital work readiness and employability competencies.

Van Laar et al. (2020) emphasized that six dimensions of digital skills, consisting of information literacy, digital communication, online collaboration, digital content creation, digital security, and technology-based problem-solving, are crucial for 21st-century skills and work readiness. Additionally, Caratozzolo et al. (2025) emphasized that digital literacy, creativity, and the ability to adapt to technological change are essential components of digital readiness.

Simultaneously, the two variables, Career Anxiety and Digital Skills, have a significant influence on Work Readiness. 52.6% of the variation in Job Readiness can be explained by Career Anxiety and Digital Skills because the regression model produced in this study has explanatory power as indicated by the Adjusted R^2 value of 0.526. Although Career Anxiety does not have a significant influence partially, its presence in the model still makes a collective contribution when combined with Digital Skills.

The results of this study strengthen the Human Capital Theory in the digital context, which shows that investing in skills, especially in current digital skills will increase human capital and will be reflected in work readiness. Although the average digital skills of respondents are classified as good (47.78 out of 60), this study shows that there is still room for improvement considering that only 59.1% of respondents assessed that their digital competencies are aligned with the needs of the current world of work.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The findings of this study provide important insights with significant economic implications for the labor market and higher education system in Indonesia. The results indicate that digital skills are the dominant predictor of job readiness, while career anxiety has no significant impact. This confirms a fundamental economic reality that graduate employability experiences a real increase when graduates invest in human capital for digital competencies.

The unemployment rate among university graduates in Indonesia has reached 5.25%, higher than the national average unemployment rate (4.76%). This reflects significant economic inefficiency, particularly in the sub-optimal utilization of educated human capital. Every year, hundreds of thousands of people enter the labor market without adequate preparation due to a skills mismatch between current curricula and the demands of the digital economy. This exacerbates the paradox of high unemployment amidst a talent shortage. Therefore, investment in digital infrastructure, faculty training, and curriculum modernization is now an economic imperative. This is to improve graduates' employability through digital skills and create a competitive advantage to attract investment and encourage digital entrepreneurship.

This study also highlights the economic urgency of Indonesia's transition to a knowledge-based economy, which requires systematic investment in digital infrastructure across all universities. The fact there is no significant influence of career anxiety suggests that students actually have psychologically readiness to enter the workforce, but a major barrier remains, namely the competency alignment gap.

The findings indicate that digital skills are a dominant predictor of job readiness. So strategic action is needed at three levels. Universities should prioritize investments in digital infrastructure and curriculum (such as coding bootcamps and digital workshops),

collaborate with industry to ensure the relevance of curriculum and practical experience, and implement competency assessments to demonstrate true work readiness. Students should also proactively build digital portfolios through self-directed learning, seek practical experience (internships/freelance projects), and utilize career services to identify existing skills gaps. Meanwhile, policymakers should establish national digital competency standards linked to accreditation and funding, provide incentives for university-industry collaboration, and create widely recognized digital certification programs to prevent skills mismatches in the labor market. This integrated approach is crucial to transforming Indonesia's demographic dividend into a profitable economic asset.

This study has several limitations that must be considered, including: (1) only two independent variables were studied, which explained only 52.6% of the variance; (2) The design used was cross-sectional, which limits the ability to capture the temporal dynamics and actual outcomes of job placement; (3) The sample used was limited to management students at one university only, so the results cannot be generalized; (4) There was a reliance on individual perceptions of readiness, instead of using objective measures of employability; and (5) There was a lack of exploration of mediating or moderating mechanisms in the relationships between variables.

To address the above limitations and broaden understanding, future research is recommended to conduct longitudinal studies that track actual graduate job placement outcomes, not just perceptions of readiness. of unexplained variance in the model, especially by considering the role of soft skills, entrepreneurial orientation, and social capital. Furthermore, comparative research across disciplines and institutions has the potential to help identify best practices in digital skills integration.

References

- Agussalim, A., Mukhlis, I., Rohayati, S., Wahyuni, W., & Said, S. (2024). Unemployment of Vocational High School Graduates: The Effect of Work Skills, Family Socio-Economic Status, and Entrepreneurial Attitudes on Work Readiness. *Jurnal Ekonomi Pendidikan dan Kewirausahaan*. 12(2), 187–204. <https://doi.org/10.26740/jepk.v12n2.p187-204>
- Alnajjar, H. A., & Abou Hashish, E. A. (2024). Exploring the effectiveness of the Career Guidance and Counseling Program on the perceived readiness for the job market: A lived experience among nursing students. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 12, 1403730. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2024.1403730>
- Audrin, B., Audrin, C., & Salamin, X. (2024). Digital skills at work – Conceptual development and empirical validation of a measurement scale. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 202, 123279. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2024.123279>
- Badan Pusat Statistik. (2025a). *Unemployment rate was 4.76 percent. The average wage of employees was 3.09 million rupiah*. <https://www.bps.go.id/en/pressrelease/2025/05/05/2432>
- Badan Pusat Statistik. (2025b). *Tingkat Pengangguran Terbuka Berdasarkan Tingkat Pendidikan*. <https://www.bps.go.id/id/statistics-table/2/MTE3OSMy/tingkat-pengangguran-terbuka-berdasarkan-tingkat-pendidikan.html>

- Becker, G. S. (1993). *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education*. University of Chicago Press. <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226041223.001.0001>
- Caratozzolo, P., Chans, G. M., & Dominguez, A. (2025). Editorial: Continuing engineering education for a sustainable future. *Frontiers in Education*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2025.1629507>
- Carkit, E. (2025). A Social Cognitive Lens on Employment Anxiety and Career Optimism in the Transition from School to Work. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 73(3), 194–204. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cdq.70000>
- Fadhilah, A. S., & Maulida, F. (2025). *Pra-survei Kesiapan Kerja Mahasiswa Semester Tujuh Universitas Siliwangi* [Unpublished data]. Universitas Siliwangi.
- Kholifah, N., Nurtanto, M., Sutrisno, V. L. P., Majid, N. W. A., Subakti, H., Daryono, R. W., & Achmadi, A. (2025). Unlocking workforce readiness through digital employability skills in vocational education Graduates: A PLS-SEM analysis based on human capital Theory. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 11, 101625. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101625>
- Kim, J., Oh, J., & Rajaguru, V. (2022). Job-Seeking Anxiety and Job Preparation Behavior of Undergraduate Students. *Healthcare*, 10(2), 288. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare10020288>
- Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., & Hackett, G. (1994). Toward a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice, and performance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 45(1), 79–122.
- Potgieter, I., Coetzee, M., & Ferreira, N. (2023). University students' digital world of work readiness in relation to their employability competency. *Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education*, 27. <https://doi.org/10.47408/jldhe.vi27.922>
- Succi, C., & Canovi, M. (2020). Soft skills to enhance graduate employability: Comparing students and employers' perceptions. *Studies in Higher Education*, 45(9), 1834–1847. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1585420>
- Tushar, H., & Sooraksa, N. (2023). Global employability skills in the 21st century workplace: A semi-systematic literature review. *Heliyon*, 9(11).
- Van Laar, E., Van Deursen, A. J., Van Dijk, J. A., & De Haan, J. (2020). Determinants of 21st-century skills and 21st-century digital skills for workers: A systematic literature review. *Sage Open*, 10(1), 2158244019900176.
- World Economic Forum. (2025). *The Future of Jobs Report 2025*. World Economic Forum. <https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2025/>
- Zhao, A. (2023). The impact of career expectation on employment anxiety of art students in higher vocational colleges during the COVID-19: A chain mediating role of social support and psychological capital. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, 1141472. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1141472>