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# THE EFFECT OF CAREER PLANNING AND SELF-EFFICACY ON WORK READINESS OF SILIWANGI UNIVERSITY FRESH GRADUATES

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**Abstract.** This study investigates the influence of career planning and self-efficacy on job readiness among fresh graduates entering the workforce at Siliwangi University. Self-efficacy, defined as an individual's belief in their capacity to execute actions necessary to achieve specific objectives, constitutes a fundamental psychological construct for employment preparation. Utilizing a quantitative approach with saturated sampling methodology, data were collected from 30 respondents aged 21–24 years and analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis. The findings demonstrate that career planning and self-efficacy collectively contribute significantly to job readiness, accounting for 68.4% of the variance. Notably, self-efficacy emerged as the dominant predictor with a statistically significant effect ($\beta = 0.679$; $p < 0.001$), while career planning did not demonstrate significant partial contribution due to multicollinearity. These results indicate that confidence in one's capabilities plays a more critical role than structured career planning alone in preparing individuals for employment. Therefore, institutional policies should integrate comprehensive self-efficacy enhancement interventions alongside career guidance programs to foster psychological resilience and employment readiness. Practical Recommendation: Higher education institutions should establish integrated career development centers that combine career counseling with evidence-based self-efficacy training workshops and mentoring programs.

**Keywords:** Career Planning; Self-Efficacy; Work Readiness; Fresh Graduates; Employment Preparation.

## 1. Introduction

The contemporary labor market environment demands increasingly sophisticated competencies from recent graduates. Human resources remain instrumental to organizational sustainability and competitive advantage, particularly within dynamic business ecosystems characterized by technological innovation and rapid change. In the digital era, employers prioritize candidates who possess not merely theoretical knowledge but demonstrable work readiness—the capacity to identify employment opportunities, adapt to organizational demands, and contribute meaningfully from commencement. This imperative has become particularly acute in 2025, as graduates face heightened competition, evolving skill requirements including artificial intelligence literacy and digital competency, and employers' diminished tolerance for extended onboarding periods. Work readiness extends beyond technical proficiency to encompass non-technical dimensions including resilience, emotional maturity, intrinsic motivation, and interpersonal effectiveness.

Career planning functions as a foundational factor influencing work readiness. It comprises the systematic process through which individuals examine their competencies, clarify their aspirations, and establish concrete career trajectories. Purposeful career planning mitigates future uncertainty, augments motivation during employment transition phases, and facilitates strategic preparation for workplace challenges. Empirical evidence

consistently validates that structured career planning produces favorable effects on graduate employment outcomes.

Self-efficacy—operationalized as an individual's conviction regarding their capacity to execute required actions—similarly constitutes a critical determinant of work readiness. Elevated self-efficacy levels enhance psychological resilience, a measurable component of employment preparedness. However, extant research demonstrates inconsistent findings regarding self-efficacy's relationship with work readiness, with certain investigations confirming significant associations while others report null effects. These contradictions necessitate further empirical examination.

This investigation re-examines the simultaneous and individual influences of career planning and self-efficacy on work readiness among fresh graduates of Siliwangi University, a context characterized by specific institutional characteristics and student demographics. The research employs multiple linear regression methodology to establish causal associations. Fresh graduates from Siliwangi University comprise the target population, as they occupy a pivotal career transition stage requiring comprehensive preparation. The research scope encompasses the following delimitations:

1) Research Population: Fresh graduate students at Siliwangi University, Faculty of Economics and Business
2) Research Focus: Causal relationships among career planning, self-efficacy, and work readiness variables
3) Analytical Approach: Quantitative methodology employing multiple linear regression for partial and simultaneous hypothesis testing

## 2. Literature Review and Hypothesis

### 2.1 Career Planning ($X_1$)

Career planning encompasses the deliberate activities undertaken by individuals to orient their career trajectories toward specific objectives. Latif (2017) conceptualizes career planning as a systematic sequence of actions designed to attain career goals consonant with intended career direction. This process transcends simple occupational selection to encompass continuous evaluation of personal potential and organizational competencies. Measurement dimensions of Career Planning ($X_1$) include:

1. Self-Understanding: Students' analytical capacity to recognize their potential, vocational interests, competencies, and inherent limitations.
2. Career Exploration: Deliberate engagement in investigating job market opportunities, employment requirements, and contemporary workplace conditions.
3. Decision-Making: Students' capability to formulate specific career path selections grounded in personal analysis and comprehensive labor market information.
4. Self-Preparation: Concrete behavioral actions directed toward acquiring or enhancing relevant technical and transferable skills.

### 2.2 Self-Efficacy ($X_2$)

Self-efficacy represents a central theoretical construct within social cognitive theory frameworks. Bandura (1998) defines self-efficacy as an individual's conviction regarding their capacity to orchestrate and execute the specific behaviors necessary for goal attainment. This psychological belief substantively influences action selection, effort

expenditure, persistence during obstacles, and responses to setbacks. Alwisol (2017) characterizes self-efficacy as personal perception of functional capacity within particular contexts. Bandura (1998) identifies four primary sources informing self-efficacy development:

1. Performance Accomplishment: Constitutes the most potent source. Direct task mastery and past achievement success amplify efficacy expectations, whereas repeated failure diminishes self-confidence.
2. Vicarious Experience: Observation of comparable others' successful task execution, particularly individuals perceived as similarly capable, enhances self-efficacy perception.
3. Social Persuasion: Credible encouragement and affirmation from mentors, instructors, or professionals can strengthen or attenuate self-efficacy beliefs, though effects remain limited compared to direct accomplishment.
4. Emotional and Physiological States: Psychological experiences including anxiety, stress, and fear influence self-efficacy. Negative emotional states reduce efficacy, whereas composed and optimistic states enhance it.

### 2.3 Work Readiness (Y)

Work readiness represents the psychological and behavioral preparedness state achieved through systematic employment preparation. Caballero and Walker (2011) emphasize that work readiness prioritizes personal psychological attributes and adaptive mechanisms rather than isolated technical capabilities. Work readiness is operationally defined as an individual's capacity level for identifying employment opportunities, acquiring positions, and successfully integrating into organizational environments. Work readiness measurement encompasses four essential dimensions per Caballero and Walker (2011) model:

1. Resilience: Capacity to survive adversity, recover from setbacks, and adapt affirmatively when confronting workplace stress and inevitable organizational change.
2. Maturity: Psychological and emotional development reflected in responsible decision-making, accountability demonstration, and long-term career perspective.
3. Motivation: Sustained internal drive propelling goal achievement, opportunity pursuit, and sustained elevated performance.
4. Interpersonal Skills: Social competencies encompassing effective communication, collaborative teamwork, and professional relational effectiveness.

### 2.4 Relevant Previous Research and Theoretical Positioning

Empirical studies on career planning and self-efficacy's effects on work readiness reveal extensive research engagement. International investigations underscore key theoretical distinctions. Fitriyani et al. (2025) found soft skills and self-efficacy mediate fresh graduates' job readiness via work motivation in Indonesia, with self-efficacy as pivotal. Nabilah and Ulya (2025) identified self-efficacy as a major predictor of work readiness in vocational students, explaining 59.8% variance. Tasuib et al. (2024) showed self-efficacy positively influences psychology students' readiness (effect size = 0.304).

Earlier studies yield mixed results. Alifah and Marsofiyati (2023) linked career planning to readiness, finding no self-efficacy effect. Hariyati (2022) conversely noted

self-efficacy's significant impact. International evidence supports self-efficacy: Lent et al. (2020) showed it mediates proactive personality's effects on employment via career clarity. Caballero and Walker (2011) demonstrated self-efficacy and resilience predict graduate success longitudinally.

**Relationship between Career Planning ($X_1$) and Work Readiness (Y)**

Career planning provides students with clarity regarding their career direction and facilitates informed decision-making, thereby strengthening motivation and maturity key components of work readiness. Through systematic self-understanding, exploration, and preparation, career planning encourages proactive engagement in activities that support a successful transition into the workforce. Accordingly, theory suggests a positive and significant relationship between career planning and work readiness.

**Relationship between Self-Efficacy ($X_2$) and Work Readiness (Y)**

Self-efficacy functions as a key psychological determinant of work readiness, as individuals with strong confidence in their capabilities demonstrate greater persistence, resilience, and effectiveness when facing workplace demands. Higher self-efficacy enhances one's ability to cope with challenges and adapt to organizational expectations, directly supporting the resilience dimension of work readiness. Despite varied findings in previous studies, theoretical frameworks consistently position self-efficacy as a fundamental factor influencing individuals' preparedness for employment.

**Simultaneous Influence ($X_1$ and $X_2$) on Work Readiness (Y)**

Career planning and self-efficacy jointly contribute to shaping work readiness by integrating cognitive direction with psychological capability. Career planning offers structured guidance, while self-efficacy provides the confidence and persistence needed to act on those plans. When combined, these factors form a complementary foundation that supports students' overall preparedness for employment. Prior research indicates that both variables together explain a substantial portion of work readiness variance, reinforcing their collective importance in predicting successful workforce entry.

### 2.5 Research Hypotheses

1. **$H_1$:** Career planning ($X_1$) exerts positive significant effects on fresh graduate work readiness (Y) at Siliwangi University.
2. **$H_2$:** Self-efficacy ($X_2$) exerts positive significant effects on fresh graduate work readiness (Y) at Siliwangi University.
3. **$H_3$:** Career planning ($X_1$) and self-efficacy ($X_2$) simultaneously exert positive significant effects on fresh graduate work readiness (Y) at Siliwangi University.

## 3. Research Method

### 3.1 Research Design and Approach

This investigation employs a quantitative explanatory design, conceptualized to elucidate causal relationships among research variables. The quantitative approach was selected because this research tests hypotheses formulated deductively from established theoretical frameworks and measures independent variable influence magnitude on dependent variables utilizing statistical analysis methodologies. The cross-sectional

survey research design involves data collection at a specific temporal point to analyze relationships among Career Planning ($X_1$), Self-Efficacy ($X_2$), and Work Readiness (Y) in Siliwangi University fresh graduates.

### 3.2 Sampling and Population

This study employed saturated sampling, a method in which all members of a relatively small population are included to ensure complete representation and eliminate sampling bias. The approach was appropriate given the limited number of fresh graduates in the Faculty of Economics and Business at Siliwangi University, enabling full population inclusion and maximizing statistical power. A total of 30 graduates aged 21–24 years participated, all of whom had fulfilled academic requirements and intended to enter the workforce immediately.

### 3.3 Data Collection Instruments and Measurement

Data were collected utilizing structured questionnaires employing five-point Likert-type response scales (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree). Instruments measured the three conceptually defined variables through validated dimension-specific items:

1. Career Planning ($X_1$): Eight items measuring self-understanding, career exploration, decision-making, and self-preparation
2. Self-Efficacy ($X_2$): Six items assessing performance accomplishment, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and emotional states
3. Work Readiness (Y): Eight items evaluating resilience, maturity, motivation, and interpersonal skills

### 3.4 Reliability and Validity Assessment

**Validity Testing:** All questionnaire items demonstrated acceptable validity. Item-to-total correlations exceeded the critical r-table value (0.361, $\alpha = 0.05$), with Career Planning items ranging r = 0.383–0.810, Self-Efficacy items ranging r = 0.744–0.936, and Work Readiness items ranging r = 0.644–0.880. All items demonstrated statistical significance ($p < 0.05$), confirming construct validity.

**Reliability Testing:** Internal consistency assessment via Cronbach's Alpha coefficient indicated excellent reliability across all variables: Career Planning ($\alpha = 0.836$), Self-Efficacy ($\alpha = 0.932$), and Work Readiness ($\alpha = 0.892$). These values substantially exceed the 0.70 minimum reliability threshold, indicating instrument internal consistency and temporal stability sufficiency for hypothesis testing.

### 3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

Analysis proceeded sequentially through multiple stages:

1. Descriptive Statistical Analysis: Computation of mean scores, standard deviations, and frequency distributions for demographic and variable characteristics
2. Classical Assumption Testing: Normality assessment via Kolmogorov-Smirnov testing, linearity evaluation, multicollinearity diagnosis through variance inflation

factor (VIF) and tolerance statistics, and heteroscedasticity inspection via scatter plot analysis

3. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis: Estimation of standardized and unstandardized coefficients, testing of partial effects (t-tests), simultaneous effects (F-tests), and effect magnitude quantification via coefficient of determination ($R^2$)

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Preliminary Analysis: Validity and Reliability

The validity assessment demonstrated that all questionnaire items met the required psychometric standards. Item-total correlation values for each construct—Career Planning, Self-Efficacy, and Work Readiness—exceeded the critical r-table coefficient of 0.361 at a 5% significance level. Specifically, Career Planning items recorded correlation values ranging from 0.383 to 0.810, Self-Efficacy items ranged from 0.744 to 0.936, and Work Readiness items ranged from 0.644 to 0.880. Because all items showed statistically significant correlations ($p < 0.05$), each was confirmed to be valid and appropriate for inclusion in subsequent analyses. These results indicate that the measurement instruments possess adequate construct validity and accurately capture the intended theoretical dimensions.

The reliability assessment using Cronbach's Alpha indicates that all variables demonstrate strong internal consistency. Career Planning ($\alpha = 0.836$), Self-Efficacy ($\alpha = 0.932$), and Work Readiness ($\alpha = 0.892$) each exceed the 0.70 reliability threshold, confirming that the measurement instruments are dependable and suitable for further statistical analysis.

### 4.2 Classical Assumption Testing

Normality Test: Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results indicated normal data distribution (Asymp. Sig. = 0.200 > 0.05), satisfying normality assumption requirements for regression analysis.

Multicollinearity Test: Tolerance statistics (0.757) and variance inflation factor (VIF = 1.321) fell within acceptable ranges (Tolerance > 0.10; VIF < 10), confirming absence of problematic multicollinearity among predictors.

Heteroscedasticity Test: Scatter plot inspection demonstrated random residual distribution patterns, confirming homogeneity of variance and absence of heteroscedasticity.

### Primary Analysis: Multiple Linear Regression Results

Table 1. Simultaneous Effects (F-test)

**ANOVA**

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Regression | 384,031 | 2 | 192,016 | 29,219 | .000b |
| | Residual | 177,435 | 27 | 6,572 | | |
| | Total | 561,467 | 29 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: Y

b. Predictors: (Constant), $X_2$, $X_1$

The omnibus F-test demonstrated statistical significance ($F = 29.219$; $p < 0.001$), indicating that career planning and self-efficacy variables collectively exert significant effects on work readiness.

Table 2. Partial Effects (t-tests) and Coefficients:

**Coefficients**

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. | Collinearity Statistics | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | Tolerance | VIF |
| 1 | (Constant) | 7,854 | 3,940 | | 1,993 | .056 | | |
| | $X_1$ | .271 | .138 | .244 | 1,963 | .060 | .757 | 1,321 |
| | $X_2$ | .706 | .129 | .679 | 5,462 | .000 | .757 | 1,321 |

a. Dependent Variable: Y

**Effect Magnitude:** The coefficient of determination ($R^2$) = 0.684, indicating that career planning and self-efficacy collectively explain 68.4% of work readiness variance, with remaining 31.6% attributable to unmeasured factors.

**Interpretation of Key Findings:**

Self-efficacy emerged as the statistically significant individual predictor of work readiness ($\beta = 0.679$; $t = 5.462$; $p < 0.001$), demonstrating that each unit increase in self-efficacy corresponds to 0.706 unit increase in work readiness. Career planning demonstrated marginal effects approaching statistical significance ($\beta = 0.244$; $t = 1.963$; $p = 0.060$), suggesting potential contribution to work readiness though not reaching conventional significance threshold. The simultaneous model proved highly significant ($F = 29.219$; $p < 0.001$), confirming that combined career planning and self-efficacy effects substantially predict work readiness.

## 5. Discussion

The findings demonstrate that self-efficacy is the strongest predictor of work readiness among fresh graduates, aligning with recent studies that similarly identify self-efficacy as a primary determinant of employment preparedness. The model's explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.684$) surpasses that of several prior investigations, likely due to the saturated sampling method that captured the full population. Career planning showed an effect that approached significance, consistent with mixed results in the literature, suggesting that its influence may operate indirectly or be overshadowed by self-efficacy when both variables are analyzed simultaneously. The moderate multicollinearity observed indicates conceptual overlap, as individuals with higher self-efficacy also tend to engage more actively in career planning. Although the findings are contextually relevant to business graduates in Indonesian higher education, generalizability to other disciplines or international settings remains limited. Overall, the results reinforce the theoretical proposition that psychological belief in one's capabilities plays a more pivotal role in work readiness than cognitive planning alone, underscoring the need for educational institutions to integrate confidence-building interventions alongside career guidance.

## 6. Limitations

This study is subject to several limitations. First, the research was conducted exclusively within the Faculty of Economics and Business at Siliwangi University, which restricts the generalizability of findings to other institutions, disciplines, or broader labor market contexts. Second, although career planning and self-efficacy jointly explained 68.4% of the variance in work readiness, a substantial proportion remains influenced by unmeasured factors such as internship experience, soft skills, academic performance, socioeconomic background, mental health, personality traits, and the quality of institutional career services. Third, the use of a cross-sectional design prohibits inference of causal direction over time, while reliance on self-report questionnaires introduces potential response bias. Finally, the relatively small sample size ($n = 30$) limits statistical power and constrains the depth of multivariate analysis.

## 7. Conclusion

This empirical investigation confirmed that career planning and self-efficacy variables jointly exert statistically significant influences on fresh graduate work readiness at Siliwangi University. Multiple linear regression analysis demonstrated collective model significance ($F = 29.219$; $p < 0.001$), with combined variables explaining 68.4% of work readiness variance. Notably, self-efficacy emerged as the singular statistically significant individual predictor ($\beta = 0.679$; $p < 0.001$), while career planning demonstrated marginal effects attributable to overlapping variance with self-efficacy. These findings underscore that psychological self-confidence and capability beliefs constitute foundational determinants of employment readiness, suggesting that comprehensive institutional support requires prioritizing self-efficacy enhancement through evidence-based interventions including vicarious modeling, social persuasion from credible mentors, and structured mastery experiences.

## 8. Recommendations

Higher education institutions should develop integrated programs that combine career counseling with systematic self-efficacy enhancement. Key components include mentorship with industry professionals and alumni, experiential learning and simulation-based training, resilience and confidence-building workshops, and structured skills assessment. Institutions are also encouraged to evaluate program effectiveness through longitudinal tracking of graduates' employment outcomes. Future studies should adopt longitudinal designs to observe changes in work readiness over time and incorporate additional psychological and contextual variables such as emotional intelligence, resilience, institutional support, and socioeconomic factors. Research should also examine moderating influences across disciplines and demographic groups, and comparative cross-national studies are recommended to assess the transferability of findings across diverse educational and labor market environments.

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