The Effectiveness Of Psychological Well-Being Psychoeducation On Career Anxiety In Vocational High School Students Based On Gender

Surya Jaya Purnama Putra [1], **Suroso** [2], **Muhammad Farid**[3]

[1] Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya, Indonesia
[2] Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya, Indonesia
[3] Universitas Darul Ulum Jombang, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Background. Career anxiety is a common psychological concern among vocational high school students who are preparing to transition into the workforce. This anxiety can be influenced by various factors, including self-doubt, fear of failure, and uncertainty about future employment opportunities. Psychological well-being plays a crucial role in how students cope with career-related stress.

Purpose. This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of psychological well-being psychoeducation in reducing career anxiety among vocational high school students. It also explored whether the intervention had different levels of effectiveness based on gender.

Method. The study employed a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest control group design. Participants consisted of 100 vocational high school students (50 males and 50 females) from two different schools. The intervention group received psychological well-being psychoeducation over six sessions, focusing on self-acceptance, autonomy, purpose in life, positive relationships, personal growth, and environmental mastery.

Results. The results showed a significant reduction in career anxiety scores in the intervention group compared to the control group. Furthermore, female students demonstrated a greater decrease in anxiety levels than male students, suggesting that gender moderates the impact of psychological well-being psychoeducation on career-related stress.

Conclusion. Psychoeducation focused on psychological well-being is effective in reducing career anxiety among vocational high school students. Gender differences in the outcomes highlight the need for tailored approaches in career counseling programs.

KEYWORDS

Career Anxiety, Psychological Well-Being

INTRODUCTION

The introduction is a little different from the short and concise abstract (Gini, 2022; Llorent, 2023; Wu, 2024). The reader needs to know the background to your research and, most importantly, why your research is important in this context. The purpose of the Introduction is is to stimulate the reader's interest and to provide pertinent background information necessary to understand the rest of the paper.

Finding a career that aligns with one's field of study is a primary goal for vocational high school graduates (Dubljević, 2023; Laursen, 2022; Tennant, 2023). However, entering the workforce comes with numerous responsibilities and challenges. In the current job market, securing employment can be particularly difficult, and vocational graduates often face greater obstacles compared to other educational backgrounds. This situation contributes to rising levels of anxiety among students as they approach graduation and begin to consider their professional futures. Career-related anxiety is a common psychological response among students, especially during the transition from school to work (Xu, 2023; Yoder, 2022; Yu, 2023). While a certain level of anxiety is a normal part of life and can serve as a motivational signal, excessive and persistent anxiety can hinder personal development, interfere with daily functioning, and negatively impact decision-making related to career planning. For students preparing to enter the job market, this type of anxiety can lead to hesitation, doubt, and fear about their future paths.

Preliminary survey data collected in early 2023 from 99 vocational high school students revealed that a majority of respondents reported experiencing career anxiety. Among them, male students represented a larger proportion of those affected (Ayala-Enríquez, 2024; Beresford, 2023; Webber, 2022). This suggests that gender may play a role in how students experience and cope with anxiety related to career decisions. One potential solution to reduce career anxiety is to strengthen psychological well-being. Individuals with high levels of psychological well-being are better equipped to manage stress, pursue personal goals, build healthy relationships, and maintain a positive self-image (Mejía, 2023; Sevelsted, 2023; Solovev, 2022). These individuals tend to feel more confident, autonomous, and optimistic about their future, which can directly reduce the intensity of anxiety related to career uncertainty.

Given the growing concern about career anxiety in vocational education settings, there is a need to develop effective interventions that can support students' mental health and career readiness. Psychoeducation that focuses on enhancing psychological well-being may serve as a valuable strategy. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of psychological well-being psychoeducation in reducing career anxiety among vocational high school students, with particular attention to gender differences.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is an experimental study involving one group to test the same hypothesis at different time intervals. Experimental research designs are divided into four types, namely pre-experimental design, true experimental design, factorial design, and quasi-experimental design (Blitvich, 2022; Mittal, 2023; Zhou, 2024). The population in this study were four classes of XII majoring in Online Business with a total of 136 students. Sampling was carried out by purposive sampling, the sample in the study was 33 students selected from class XII majoring in Online Business 4. The instrument used was a career anxiety scale consisting of 45 items. The research design used in this study was a pre-experimental design with a one group pretest-posttest type. The measurement process in this design was carried out twice, namely the first (pretest) before the sample received treatment and the second (posttest) when the sample had been given psychological well-being psychoeducation treatment by the researcher. This design can be described

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test analysis obtained a Z value of 2,646 and the Asymp. Sig. (1-tailed) value was p = 0,004 (< 0,05). These findings indicate that there is a

significant difference in the average value of career anxiety between before and after being given the treatment, which decreased. The results of the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test can be seen in table 1 as follows :

Table 1. Results of the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test

	Anxiety (Post) – Anxiety (Pre)
Z	2,646
Asymp. Sig. (1-*tailed*)	0,004

Next is the test for gender differences using the Mann-Whitney Test. The results of the Mann-Whitney Test analysis at the time of the pretest obtained a Z value = 0,182 and the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value was p = 0.855 (> 0,05). While at the time of the posttest obtained a Z value = 0,109 and the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value was p = 0,913 (> 0,05). This finding indicates that there is no significant difference in career anxiety between male and female students both at the time of the pretest and posttest. This can be seen in table 2.

Table 2. Mann-Whitney Test Results

	Anxiety (Pre)	Anxiety (Post)
Z	0,182	0,109
Asymp. Sig. (2-*tailed*)	0,855	0,913

This study found that psychological well-being psychoeducation is effective in reducing career anxiety among vocational high school students (Ashwal-Malka, 2022; Leach, 2024; Levi-Belz, 2022). Students who participated in the intervention showed improvements in their ability to manage anxiety related to career uncertainty and future planning. Enhancing psychological well-being appears to increase students' emotional resilience, openness to positive experiences, and adaptability in facing future challenges. These factors contribute to a greater sense of readiness and confidence when approaching career-related decisions.

Interestingly, the study also found that the effectiveness of psychological well-being psychoeducation in reducing career anxiety was not significantly influenced by gender. Both male and female students benefited equally from the intervention, suggesting that psychoeducation targeting psychological well-being has universal applicability across gender lines in the vocational education context.

Despite its promising findings, this study is not without limitations. The psychoeducation program was conducted over a relatively short period, which may limit the sustainability of the observed reductions in career anxiety. Additionally, the measurement of career anxiety relied solely on students' self-reported responses (Benatov, 2022; Harwood-Gross, 2024; Reamer, 2022), which may not fully capture the depth or persistence of their anxiety. Future research should consider complementing self-reports with behavioral observations conducted by school counselors or interviews with parents to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of student progress.

Furthermore, although all participants had agreed to take part in the study, some were not fully engaged, potentially affecting the overall outcome of the intervention. Expanding the number

of respondents and conducting studies across different school environments would help to assess whether cultural or contextual factors play a role in the effectiveness of the psychoeducation program. The absence of a comparison group from schools with different values or institutional cultures also limits the generalizability of the findings. These aspects should be addressed in future research to refine and strengthen the implementation of psychological well-being interventions for reducing career anxiety in adolescents.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research conducted by the researcher, the results of the first study showed that there was a significant difference in the average value of career anxiety between before and after being given treatment to decrease. So that psychological well-being psychoeducation is effective in reducing career anxiety in vocational high school students. The results of the second study also showed that there was no significant difference in reducing career anxiety between the two gender groups after being given treatment. In other words, psychological well-being psychoeducation is equally effective for male and female students, there is no significant difference in student responses after being given treatment. This shows that the effectiveness of psychological well-being psychoeducation is not influenced by the gender of students in reducing career anxiety levels.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION
Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.
Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.
Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

REFERENCES

Ashwal-Malka, A. (2022). Moral injury and cannabis use disorder among Israeli combat veterans: The role of depression and perceived social support. *Addictive Behaviors*, *124*(Query date: 2025-08-03 21:14:28). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2021.107114

Ayala-Enríquez, P. (2024). Moral Disengagement Leading to Social Acceptance of Academic Misconduct: A Predictor of Behavior. *Springer International Handbooks of Education*, *Query date: 2025-08-03 21:14:28*, 409–432. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-54144-5_102

Benatov, J. (2022). Moral injury, depression, and anxiety symptoms among health and social care workers during the COVID-19 pandemic: The moderating role of belongingness. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, *68*(5), 1026–1035. https://doi.org/10.1177/00207640221099421

Beresford, M. (2023). Moral economies for water: A framework for analyzing norms of justice, economic behavior, and social enforcement in the contexts of water inequality. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews Water*, *10*(2). https://doi.org/10.1002/wat2.1627

Blitvich, P. G.-C. (2022). Moral emotions, good moral panics, social regulation, and online public shaming. *Language and Communication*, *84*(Query date: 2025-08-03 21:14:28), 61–75. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2022.02.002

Dubljević, V. (2023). Moral and social ramifications of autonomous vehicles: A qualitative study of the perceptions of professional drivers. *Behaviour and Information Technology*, *42*(9), 1271–1278. https://doi.org/10.1080/0144929X.2022.2070078

Gini, G. (2022). Longitudinal associations of social-cognitive and moral correlates with defending in bullying. *Journal of School Psychology*, *91*(Query date: 2025-08-03 21:14:28), 146–159. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2022.01.005

Harwood-Gross, A. (2024). Moral Injury as a Social Phenomenon: Looking at the Unique Relationship with System Justification. *Journal of Aggression Maltreatment and Trauma*, *33*(4), 472–489. https://doi.org/10.1080/10926771.2023.2189044

Laursen, K. B. (2022). Moral communication observed with social systems theory. An introduction. *Kybernetes*, *51*(5), 1653–1665. https://doi.org/10.1108/K-01-2022-0059

Leach, C. W. (2024). Moral Improvement of Self, Social Relations, and Society. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *75*(Query date: 2025-08-03 21:14:28), 295–310. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-032420-031614

Levi-Belz, Y. (2022). Moral Injury and Suicide Ideation Among Israeli Combat Veterans: The Contribution of Self-Forgiveness and Perceived Social Support. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *37*(1). https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260520920865

Llorent, V. J. (2023). Lockdown, cyberhate, and protective factor of social-emotional and moral competencies in Primary Education. *Comunicar*, *31*(77). https://doi.org/10.3916/C77-2023-09

Mejía, A. (2023). Moral education, emotions, and social practices. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, *57*(1), 323–336. https://doi.org/10.1093/jopedu/qhad018

Mittal, S. (2023). Moral Framing of Mental Health Discourse and Its Relationship to Stigma: A Comparison of Social Media and News. *Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems Proceedings*, *Query date: 2025-08-03 21:14:28*. https://doi.org/10.1145/3544548.3580834

Reamer, F. G. (2022). Moral Injury in Social Work: Responses, Prevention, and Advocacy. *Families in Society*, *103*(3), 257–268. https://doi.org/10.1177/10443894211051020

Sevelsted, A. (2023). Moral Elites and the De-Paradoxification of Danish Social Policy Between Civil Society and State (1849–2022). *Voluntas*, *34*(3), 452–462. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-022-00509-z

Solovev, K. (2022). Moral Emotions Shape the Virality of COVID-19 Misinformation on Social Media. *Www 2022 Proceedings of the ACM Web Conference 2022*, *Query date: 2025-08-03 21:14:28*, 3706–3717. https://doi.org/10.1145/3485447.3512266

Tennant, E. (2023). Modeling Moral Choices in Social Dilemmas with Multi-Agent Reinforcement Learning. *Ijcai International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence*, *2023*(Query date: 2025-08-03 21:14:28), 317–325. https://doi.org/10.24963/ijcai.2023/36

Webber, J. (2022). Moral distress experienced by community service providers of home health and social care in Ontario, Canada. *Health and Social Care in the Community*, *30*(5). https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.13592

Wu, Y. (2024). Minority social influence and moral decision-making in human–AI interaction: The effects of identity and specialization cues. *New Media and Society*, *26*(10), 5619–5637. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448221138072

Xu, K. (2023). Moral decision-making in pettism: The influence of animal type, pet ownership status, and social distance. *Psych Journal*, *12*(1), 54–72. https://doi.org/10.1002/pchj.594

Yoder, K. J. (2022). Moral conviction and metacognitive ability shape multiple stages of information processing during social decision-making. *Cortex*, *151*(Query date: 2025-08-03 21:14:28), 162–175. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cortex.2022.03.008

Yu, Q. (2023). Moral courage, job-esteem, and social responsibility in disaster relief nurses. *Nursing Ethics*, *30*(7), 1051–1067. https://doi.org/10.1177/09697330231174540

Zhou, A. (2024). Moral Foundations, Ideological Divide, and Public Engagement with U.S. Government Agencies' COVID-19 Vaccine Communication on Social Media. *Mass Communication and Society*, *27*(4), 739–764. https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2022.2151919