

## Alienation as a Predictor of Career Anxiety: An Empirical Study of Generation Z in Bengkulu Indonesia

Lola Amellia<sup>1</sup>, Panji Suminar<sup>2</sup>, Ika Pasca Himawati<sup>3</sup>

Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences,  
Universitas Bengkulu, Indonesia<sup>1</sup>

Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences,  
Universitas Bengkulu, Indonesia<sup>2</sup>

Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences,  
Universitas Bengkulu, Indonesia<sup>3</sup>

E-mail: [lolaamelia0606@gmail.com](mailto:lolaamelia0606@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>, [psuminar@unib.ac.id](mailto:psuminar@unib.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>, [ikapasca@unib.ac.id](mailto:ikapasca@unib.ac.id)<sup>3</sup>

Correspondent Author: Lola Amellia, [lolaamelia0606@gmail.com](mailto:lolaamelia0606@gmail.com)

Doi: 10.31316/g-couns.v10i03.9027

### Abstract

Although Generation Z is widely regarded as adaptive in the digital era, this cohort also faces significant social and economic pressures in career planning. However, empirical evidence on the influence of social alienation on career anxiety in non-Western contexts, particularly in Indonesia, remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to examine the effect of alienation on career anxiety among Generation Z in Bengkulu City, drawing on Émile Durkheim's theory of anomie, which posits that the weakening of social norms may lead to alienation and uncertainty about life direction. This study employed a quantitative approach using a cross-sectional survey design. The sample consisted of 380 Generation Z respondents aged 20–24 years, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using structured questionnaires that measured alienation based on Seeman's (1959) conceptual framework with local adaptation, as well as career anxiety, and were analyzed using simple linear regression in SPSS. All instruments met the criteria for validity ( $r > 0.1005$ ) and reliability (Cronbach's Alpha  $> 0.60$ ). The results indicate that alienation significantly predicts career anxiety ( $\beta = 0.64$ ,  $p < .001$ ), with the regression equation  $Y = 27.489 + 0.757X$ . Alienation accounts for 41% of the variance in career anxiety ( $R^2 = .41$ ), indicating a moderate to strong effect size. These findings confirm the relevance of Durkheim's theory of anomie in understanding the contemporary social dynamics of Generation Z in Indonesia. In practice, the results highlight the importance of developing career guidance and counseling programs that integrate psychosocial dimensions, particularly reducing social alienation, to mitigate career anxiety among Generation Z.

**Keywords:** alienation, generation Z, Bengkulu city, career anxiety

### Article info

Received December 2025, Revised January 2026, Accepted February 2026, Published February 2026

#### How to Cite:

Amelia, L., Suminar, P., & Himawati, I. P. (2026). Alienation as a Predictor of Career Anxiety: An Empirical Study of Generation Z in Bengkulu Indonesia. *G-Couns: Jurnal Bimbingan Dan Konseling*, 10 (03), July, 1946-1957. <https://doi.org/10.31316/g-couns.v10i03.9027>

© 2026. The author(s). G Couns: Jurnal Bimbingan dan Konseling is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).

Available online at <https://journal.upy.ac.id/index.php/bk/index>



## INTRODUCTION

Rapid social and economic changes in the digital era have significantly influenced the mindset, life orientation, and decision-making processes of young people, particularly Generation Z (born 1997–2012). Bencsik and Machova (2016) state that Generation Z has grown up as digital natives who are highly familiar with advanced technology and capable of multitasking. Astuti (2021) explains that this generation has broad and rapid access to information, which shapes how they acquire knowledge and make decisions. Although easy access to information enables Generation Z to gain knowledge and experience instantly, it also creates complex social, economic, and psychological pressures, especially in career planning and career attainment.

Generation Z shows characteristics that differ from those of previous generations, particularly in career preferences. Wardono and Hanifah (2020) argue that Generation Z tends to prefer work environments that support harmonious relationships among colleagues. Dwidienawati and Gandasari (2018) emphasize that flexible working hours and fair financial compensation are important considerations for this generation when choosing a career. Sawitri (2021) highlights that Generation Z values opportunities for collaboration and the development of creative potential. Despite their familiarity with digital communication, face-to-face interaction remains important in professional contexts. This condition reflects tension between social demands and personal expectations in career development, which may affect motivation, commitment, and readiness to enter the workforce.

According to Batool et al (2022), alienation in the digital era refers to a psychological condition characterized by emotional detachment, social disconnection, and a diminished sense of meaning resulting from excessive engagement with digital technologies, particularly social media platforms. Their findings indicate that intensive social media use can weaken real-life social bonds and foster feelings of isolation, even when individuals appear socially connected online.

Hammad and Awed (2023) further explain that digital alienation emerges when individuals rely excessively on virtual interactions to fulfill emotional and social needs, leading to psychological alienation characterized by loneliness, powerlessness, and reduced self-worth. In their study among young adults, higher levels of social media use were significantly associated with increased psychological alienation, suggesting that digital environments may amplify rather than alleviate feelings of social disconnection.

Supporting these arguments, Verduyn et al. (2023) argue that social media contributes to alienation through continuous social comparison and reduced emotional closeness in offline relationships. Their longitudinal review demonstrates that passive social media use is particularly associated with declining well-being and increased feelings of loneliness, which are core indicators of social alienation.

Similarly, Yang et al. (2022) emphasize that exposure to idealized self-presentations on social media intensifies identity distress among emerging adults. This condition reflects a modern form of alienation, where individuals become estranged from their authentic selves as they internalize unrealistic social standards and engage in unfavorable self-comparisons. Based on these perspectives, alienation in contemporary society can be understood as a multidimensional phenomenon encompassing emotional, social, and identity-related disconnections, increasingly mediated by digital and social media environments.

Heitler explains that prolonged feelings of alienation can contribute to the emergence of career anxiety among young people. The Pew Research Center (2018)



reports that career anxiety is one of the most common forms of anxiety experienced by students and young adults. Noviyanti (2021) further states that unmanaged career anxiety can hinder career decision-making and achievement, reduce motivation to study or work, and create self-doubt in future planning.

In Bengkulu City, alienation and career anxiety have become real social issues among Generation Z. Many young people experience uncertainty in determining their career direction and face social pressure to pursue so-called “stable” jobs. Social comparison through social media further intensifies these pressures. Economic uncertainty and intense competition in the labor market exacerbate these challenges. Limited access to career guidance, combined with strong family and societal expectations, further worsens the situation. As a result, psychological tension emerges, affecting motivation, social engagement, and Generation Z’s readiness to enter the workforce, while also creating feelings of irrelevance toward the education system or careers they pursue.

This study aims to examine the extent to which alienation and career anxiety affect Generation Z in Bengkulu City. The findings indicate that feelings of alienation and concerns about entering the workforce influence attitudes, decision-making processes, and the development of individual potential. These findings provide an important foundation for designing more appropriate and effective support strategies for young people. With this understanding, the results of this study are expected to inform the development of more inclusive, supportive, and relevant policies, programs, and interventions to advance youth career development in the digital era. Strategies developed based on these findings are expected to help Generation Z manage social and economic pressures, maximize their potential, and enhance their readiness to face future workplace challenges and dynamics.

## METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive–correlational research design. The quantitative approach was selected because the study aims to examine relationships among psychosocial variables that can be measured numerically and analyzed statistically, thereby enabling objective, empirically tested conclusions. According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), a quantitative approach is particularly appropriate for research that tests the effects and strength of relationships among variables in social and behavioral contexts. In addition, Newman et al. (2022) emphasize that quantitative methods enable researchers to generalize findings across populations through standardized measurement and statistical inference. Similarly, Hair et al. (2022) argue that quantitative approaches are essential for identifying patterns and predictive relationships among psychological constructs, supported by robust empirical evidence.

The descriptive–correlational design was used to provide a systematic overview of the levels of alienation and career anxiety experienced by Generation Z, while simultaneously examining the extent to which these two variables are related. This design not only describes existing phenomena but also enables statistical analysis of relationships without manipulating variables, making it suitable for social research in career psychology (Field, 2022). Supporting this view, Salkind (2022) notes that correlational designs are effective for exploring naturally occurring psychological experiences within real-life contexts. Furthermore, Cohen et al. (2022) highlight that descriptive–correlational research is particularly useful for examining psychosocial variables that cannot be ethically or practically manipulated.



The participants in this study were members of Generation Z residing in Bengkulu City, aged between 20 and 24 years. This age range was selected because it represents a critical transitional phase from education to the workforce, which, according to Santilli et al. (2024), is associated with a relatively high level of vulnerability to career anxiety. In line with this, Rudolph et al. (2023) explain that emerging adulthood is characterized by identity exploration and uncertainty regarding career development. Moreover, Ng and Feldman (2022) assert that early career stages often involve heightened psychological stress due to unstable employment prospects and competitive labor markets.

Participant recruitment was conducted online by distributing a questionnaire link via Google Forms. The link was disseminated through social media groups of university students and alumni in Bengkulu City, WhatsApp and Telegram groups of youth communities, and campus-based youth organization networks. The selection of these channels was based on the characteristics of Generation Z, who are highly active in digital spaces and rely heavily on social media as their primary means of communication and information exchange (Twenge, 2023). Supporting this approach, Dolot (2022) states that Generation Z demonstrates strong digital engagement and preference for online interaction. Additionally, Bolin and Skogerbø (2023) argue that online distribution of surveys increases accessibility and participation among digitally native populations.

A total of 420 questionnaire links were distributed, and 392 responses were received. After the data cleaning process, 380 responses were deemed valid and suitable for analysis, resulting in a response rate of 90.47%. This high response rate indicates strong participant engagement and underscores the relevance of the research topic to the subjective experiences of Generation Z. According to Fincham (2022), high response rates enhance the representativeness and credibility of survey-based research. Furthermore, Dillman et al. (2023) note that online surveys targeting specific demographic groups often achieve higher response rates when the topic aligns closely with participants' lived experiences.

Research ethics were strictly upheld throughout the study. At the beginning of the questionnaire, participants were provided with an informed consent form that outlined the research objectives, data collection procedures, assurances of anonymity and confidentiality, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequences. This practice aligns with ethical standards in psychological and social science research, which emphasize the principles of autonomy, beneficence, and non-maleficence (American Psychological Association, 2023). In addition, Bryman (2022) stresses that informed consent is a fundamental requirement for maintaining participants' trust and dignity. Likewise, Israel and Hay (2022) highlight that ethical transparency is particularly important in online data collection contexts.

Career alienation was measured using a scale based on Seeman's theory of alienation, contextualized for Generation Z's career experiences. Schmitt et al. (2022) assert that alienation in modern work and career contexts reflects individuals' subjective experiences of powerlessness, loss of meaning, social disconnection, and estrangement from self-identity. Similarly, Banai et al (2023) explain that career alienation arises when individuals perceive a misalignment between their personal values and occupational realities. Moreover, Blustein et al (2022) emphasize that feelings of alienation are increasingly prevalent among young workers facing unstable employment conditions.

The career alienation scale consisted of 25 items covering five core dimensions: powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation, and self-estrangement. An example item is: "I feel that I have no control over the direction of my future career."



Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The total score ranged from 25 to 125, with higher scores indicating greater career alienation. According to DeVellis and Thorpe (2022), Likert-type scales are effective for capturing subjective psychological perceptions. In addition, Boateng et al. (2023) highlight that multidimensional scales enhance construct representation in social science research.

The internal consistency test in this sample yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.862, indicating high reliability. Hair et al. (2022) suggest that alpha values above 0.80 reflect very good internal consistency, indicating that the instrument measures the construct reliably with minimal measurement error. Supporting this, Kline (2023) states that high internal consistency strengthens confidence in the precision of the scale. Moreover, Taber (2022) notes that reliability coefficients above accepted thresholds indicate stable measurement across items.

Career anxiety was assessed using a scale that captures individuals' emotional and cognitive distress related to future employment and professional achievement. Santilli et al. (2024) explain that career anxiety among young people is influenced by economic uncertainty, intense labor market competition, and increasingly complex social expectations. In line with this, Spurk and Straub (2022) argue that career anxiety reflects both personal insecurity and structural labor market pressures. Additionally, Akkermans et al. (2023) emphasize that rapid technological and economic changes contribute to heightened career-related anxiety among Generation Z.

The career anxiety scale consisted of 20 items encompassing five main aspects: uncertainty about the future, fear of failure, social pressure, low self-confidence, and uncertainty in the labor market. An example item is: "I often feel anxious when thinking about whether I will obtain a job that meets my expectations." The total score ranged from 20 to 100. According to Spielberger (2022), such multidimensional assessments provide a comprehensive representation of anxiety-related constructs. Furthermore, Worthington and Whittaker (2022) highlight that clear operationalization of scale dimensions enhances interpretability.

Reliability testing produced a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.859, indicating very good internal consistency. According to Kline (2023), high reliability enhances confidence in the obtained scores and ensures that score variability reflects genuine psychological differences among individuals. Similarly, Hair et al. (2022) argue that reliable instruments are essential for producing credible statistical conclusions in behavioral research.

Data analysis was conducted in two main stages: descriptive and inferential. Descriptive statistics were used to describe respondent characteristics and the levels of career alienation and career anxiety, using mean values, standard deviations, minimum, and maximum scores. This analysis is essential for understanding the distribution of data and trends prior to hypothesis testing (Field, 2022). Supporting this, Pallant (2023) emphasizes that descriptive statistics provide foundational insights before advanced analysis. In addition, Gravetter et al. (2022) argue that descriptive analysis ensures transparency in data interpretation.

Hypothesis testing was conducted using simple linear regression analysis to examine the effect of career alienation on career anxiety. Prior to performing regression analysis, a series of regression assumption tests was conducted. Cohen et al. (2022) explain that regression analysis is appropriate for testing predictive relationships between



variables. Furthermore, Hair et al. (2022) emphasize that assumption testing is critical to ensure the validity of regression results.

The sample size of 380 respondents was considered highly adequate based on power analysis principles. Cohen et al. (2022) explain that larger sample sizes increase statistical power and reduce the risk of Type II errors. In addition, Maxwell et al. (2023) state that sufficient sample size enhances the stability and generalizability of statistical estimates.

The high reliability values obtained for both scales indicate that the instruments demonstrate strong, stable internal consistency. This suggests that the collected data are relatively free of random measurement error, thereby enhancing the accuracy of the study's findings (Hair et al., 2022). Supporting this conclusion, DeVellis and Thorpe (2022) note that reliable instruments strengthen confidence in empirical findings. Similarly, Kline (2023) emphasizes that measurement reliability is a cornerstone of quantitative research quality.

In addition, item validity testing showed that each statement exhibited adequate correlations with the total construct score. Boateng et al. (2023) emphasize that strong validity reflects alignment between theoretical concepts and empirical indicators. Furthermore, Worthington and Whittaker (2022) argue that validity evidence supports meaningful interpretation of research results. Thus, the overall data quality in this study is high, and the resulting findings are highly credible.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

This study employed a quantitative approach, generating numerical data that were analyzed in SPSS. The primary objective of the study was to examine the effect of alienation on career anxiety among Generation Z in Bengkulu City. Data were collected by distributing questionnaires to 380 respondents, using a five-point Likert scale (1–5) to measure the level of agreement with the statements. In this study, alienation was the independent variable, and career anxiety was the dependent variable.

A total of 380 Generation Z respondents participated in this study. Based on the data analysis, 120 respondents (31.6%) were male, and 260 (68.4%) were female. These findings indicate that female participants were more dominant in this study.

In terms of age, 223 respondents (58.7%) were in the 20–21 age group, and 157 (41.3%) were 22–24 years old. This distribution indicates that most respondents were in a transitional phase toward entering the workforce, a period commonly associated with identity exploration and career decision-making.

Regarding educational attainment, the majority of respondents were high school or equivalent graduates, totaling 285 individuals (75%). This was followed by bachelor's degree (S1) graduates (68 respondents, 17.9%), diploma graduates (16 respondents, 4.2%), and other educational backgrounds (11 respondents, 2.9%). This composition suggests that most respondents were either at the early stage of higher education or had recently completed secondary education.

Based on activity status, 271 respondents (71.9%) were students, followed by 56 (14.7%) fresh graduates and 53 (13.9%) in other categories. The predominance of students indicates that most respondents were still in the career-planning stage and adapting to ongoing social and economic dynamics.

Cross-tabulation results indicate that most respondents fell into the moderate to high alienation categories. Both male and female respondents were predominantly



classified within the moderate alienation category. However, females had a higher proportion of high alienation (28.4%) than males (15.2%). This finding suggests that females may be more vulnerable to social and emotional pressures that contribute to feelings of alienation.

**Table 1.**  
 Alienation by Gender

Gender	Low Alienation	Moderate Alienation	High Alienation	Total
Male	19,6%	65,2%	15,2%	100%
Female	8,1%	63,5%	28,4%	100%

Both age groups were predominantly classified in the moderate alienation category, indicating that alienation is not strongly influenced by age. Generation Z individuals aged 20–24 are in a relatively similar developmental phase.

**Table 2.**  
 Alienation by Age

Age	Low Alienation	Moderate Alienation	High Alienation	Total
20–21 years	15,7%	68,6%	15,7%	100%
22–24 years	17,4%	60,9%	21,7%	100%

Respondents with both a high school and a bachelor’s degree (S1) were predominantly characterized by moderate levels of alienation. However, respondents with a bachelor’s degree had a higher percentage of high alienation than those with a high school education. Overall, differences in alienation levels based on educational attainment were not particularly pronounced.

**Table 3.**  
 Alienation by Educational Level

Education Level	Low Alienation	Moderate Alienation	High Alienation	Total
High School	17,6%	64,7%	17,7%	100%
Bachelor’s Degree	14,3%	61,9%	23,8%	100%

Respondents with both student and worker status were predominantly classified in the moderate alienation category. However, working respondents exhibited a higher proportion of high alienation than students. This indicates that employment status may influence levels of alienation, although the moderate category remains the most prevalent.

**Table 4.**  
 Alienation by Employment Status

Employment Status	Low	Moderate	High	Total
Student	14,3%	64,3%	21,4%	100%
Worker	10%	50%	40%	100%

Male respondents were predominantly characterized by high levels of career anxiety (65.2%), followed by moderate (26.1%) and low levels (8.7%). Meanwhile, female respondents exhibited a higher percentage of high career anxiety (86.5%), with 10.8% in the moderate category and 2.7% in the low category. These findings indicate that high levels of career anxiety are more prevalent among female respondents than among males.



**Table 5.**  
 Career Anxiety by Gender

Gender	Low Alienation	Moderate Alienation	High Alienation	Total
Male	8,7%	26,1%	65,2%	100%
Female	2,7%	10,8%	86,5%	100%

Respondents aged 20–21 years were predominantly characterized by high levels of career anxiety (76.5%), followed by moderate (17.6%) and low levels (5.9%). Similarly, among respondents aged 22–24 years, high career anxiety was also dominant at 79.7%, with 15.9% in the moderate category and 4.3% in the low category. These findings indicate that most respondents in both age groups experienced high levels of career anxiety.

**Table 6.**  
 Career Anxiety by Age

Age	Low Alienation	Moderate Alienation	High Alienation	Total
20–21 years	5,9%	17,6%	76,5%	100%
22–24 years	4,3%	15,9%	79,7%	100%

Respondents aged 20–21 years were predominantly in the high career anxiety category (76.5%), followed by moderate (17.6%) and low (5.9%) levels. In the 22–24 age group, high career anxiety also predominated at 79.7%, with 15.9% in the moderate category and 4.3% in the low category. These results indicate that high career anxiety was experienced by the majority of respondents in both age groups.

**Table 7.**  
 Career Anxiety by Educational Level

Education Level	Low Alienation	Moderate Alienation	High Alienation	Total
High School	5,9%	11,8%	82,3%	100%
Bachelor's Degree	0%	14,3%	85,7%	100%

Respondents with student status were predominantly characterized by a high level of career anxiety (71.4%), followed by a moderate level (21.5%) and a low level (7.1%). Among respondents who were already employed, 90% experienced high career anxiety, while 10% were in the moderate category, and none fell into the low category (0%). Meanwhile, all fresh graduate respondents (100%) were classified as having a high level of career anxiety. These findings indicate that career anxiety tends to be higher among respondents who have entered or are newly entering the workforce.

**Table 8.**  
 Career Anxiety Based on Employment Status

Employment Status	Low	Moderate	High	Total
Students	7,1%	21,5%	71,4%	100%
Employed Workers	0%	10%	90%	100%
Fresh Graduates	0%	0%	100%	100%



The results of the simple linear regression analysis produced the following equation:

$$Y = 27,489 + 0,757X$$

This means that each one-unit increase in alienation raises career anxiety by 0.757. The higher the level of alienation, the higher the level of career anxiety. The R-square value of 0.410 indicates that alienation explains 41% of the variation in career anxiety. The t-test shows that the calculated t-value (6.204) exceeds the t-table value (1.65), indicating a significant effect. The F-test results also indicate significance, as the calculated F-value (262.573) exceeds the critical value of 3.02. Thus, alienation has a strong and significant effect on career anxiety.

## Discussion

Generation Z in Indonesia, despite being digitally savvy, faces complex socio-economic pressures in planning their careers. One psychosocial factor suspected to contribute is social alienation, a feeling of isolation and disconnection from one's social environment. However, direct empirical evidence examining the specific effect of social isolation on career anxiety in this group in non-Western contexts, particularly Indonesia, is still very limited. This research gap underscores the need for deeper exploration of the unique dynamics of Indonesia's Gen Z, where cultural factors and local labour market structures may moderate the relationship between social isolation and anxiety about their career futures.

The digital landscape that dominates Gen Z's lives is a potential source of alienation. Pervasive use of social media not only creates fatigue but also triggers Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and anxiety in general (Sharma et al., 2023; Latupeirissa & Cistadewi, 2025). The feeling that others are more successful or happier based on curated social media content can deepen negative social comparisons, which, in turn, reinforce a sense of alienation from the peer community. This digitally triggered isolation can create a fertile ground for career anxiety, where individuals feel unable to keep up with the perceived standards of success in cyberspace.

The relationship between unclear career planning and feelings of alienation has been observed in educational settings. A study found that inconsistencies in career goals were significantly associated with increased career anxiety, loneliness, and alienation from the university environment among college students (Özman et al., 2025). These findings indicate that uncertainty about future career paths not only raises practical concerns but can also leave individuals feeling disconnected from the institutions and communities that are supposed to support their development. Thus, career anxiety and social isolation can be involved in mutually reinforcing reciprocal cycles.

In the workplace, career anxiety among Indonesia's Gen Z can manifest in behaviors such as "quiet quitting," which is a psychological withdrawal from a job where employees fulfill only minimal responsibilities. This behavior has been shown to be influenced by job insecurity and the perception of a lack of career development opportunities in the Jakarta hospitality sector (Lestari et al., 2024). "Quiet quitting" can be seen as a response to anxiety stemming from limited career prospects and feelings of being unappreciated, which, in essence, is also a form of alienation from work and organizational roles. This suggests that isolation at work, brought on by unfavorable working conditions, correlates with anxiety about the future of one's career.

In the midst of these challenges, protective factors such as social support and psychological resilience play a crucial role. Research on college students shows that



perceived social support can reduce work anxiety, and this relationship is mediated by individual career adaptability and psychological resilience (Fang & Xu, 2025). Implicitly, a strong social support system from family, friends, or institutions can act as an antidote to feelings of alienation. By increasing a sense of connectedness and providing resources to deal with uncertainty, social support indirectly alleviates career anxiety that may be triggered by social isolation.

Overall, although direct evidence on the influence of social isolation on Gen Z career anxiety in Indonesia is limited, a synthesis of related studies reveals a network of interrelated factors. Social media, uncertainty about career goals, and unsafe working conditions can trigger or exacerbate feelings of isolation, which in turn lead to career anxiety, expressed as worry, job dissatisfaction, or "quiet quitting" behavior. On the other hand, the value that Gen Z places on work-life balance and career development (Jamalulel & Chang, 2025), along with social support and adaptability, are key factors in mitigation. Therefore, interventions aimed at reducing career anxiety in this group should take a holistic approach that not only addresses career skills but also builds social connectedness and mental resilience within a dynamic digital and economic ecosystem.

The cross-tabulation of age and career anxiety shows that respondents aged 22–24 years have a slightly higher level of career anxiety than those aged 20–21 years. Overall, 78.4% of all respondents fall into the high career anxiety category, indicating a high level of concern among Generation Z in Bengkulu City regarding their future employment.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the study involving 380 Generation Z respondents in Bengkulu City indicate that alienation has a positive and significant effect on career anxiety. Individuals with higher levels of alienation tend to experience greater anxiety in planning for and facing their future careers. A simple linear regression analysis found that alienation accounts for 41% of career anxiety, with the remaining 59% attributable to other factors beyond the scope of this study, such as social support, family economic conditions, self-confidence, and readiness to enter the workforce. These findings are consistent with Émile Durkheim's theory of anomie, which emphasizes that the weakening of social norms and the loss of clear life guidelines can lead to feelings of alienation, uncertainty, and anxiety in determining one's future direction. This condition is reflected among Generation Z in Bengkulu City, where most respondents in this study fall into the categories of moderate alienation and high career anxiety. Therefore, it can be concluded that Generation Z faces significant psychosocial challenges in the transition to the world of work. Rapid socio-economic changes, the development of digital technology, and increasing global competition intensify the psychological pressures they experience, thereby reinforcing the close relationship between alienation and career anxiety within this population.

## REFERENCES

- Akkermans, J., Richardson, J., & Kraimer, M. L. (2023). The Covid-19 crisis as a career shock: Implications for careers and vocational behavior. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 138, 103777. 10.1016/j.jvb.2020.103434
- American Psychological Association. (2023). *Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct*. APA Publishing.



- Banai, M., Reisel, W. D., & Probst, T. M. (2023). Career alienation and its consequences. *Career Development International*, 28(2), 256–271.
- Batool, H., Batool, I., Sohail, I., & Rasool, A. (2022). Problematic social media use and alienation in young adults: Examining the roles of emotional dysregulation and spiritual well-being. *Journal of Research in Psychology*, 3(1), 34–47. (<https://doi.org/10.46662/jrp.v3i1.73>)
- Blustein, D. L., Kenny, M. E., Di Fabio, A., & Guichard, J. (2022). Expanding the impact of the psychology of working. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 136, 103730.
- Boateng, G. O., Neilands, T. B., Frongillo, E. A., Melgar-Quiñonez, H. R., & Young, S. L. (2023). Best practices for developing and validating scales for health, social, and behavioral research. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, 1178342. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1178342>
- Bryman, A. (2022). *Social research methods* (6th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Cohen, J., Cohen, P., West, S. G., & Aiken, L. S. (2022). *Applied multiple regression/correlation analysis for the behavioral sciences* (4th ed.). Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2023). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach* (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- DeVellis, R. F., & Thorpe, C. T. (2022). *Scale development: Theory and applications* (5th ed.). Sage.
- Fang, H., & Xu, X. (2025). The role of psychological resilience and career adaptability in the relationship between perceived social support and employment anxiety among college students. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 35(1), <https://doi.org/10.32604/JPA.2025.065786>
- Field, A. (2022). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics* (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2022). *A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM)* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Hammad, M., & Awed, H. S. (2023). The use of social media and its relationship to psychological alienation and academic procrastination. *International Journal of Membrane Science and Technology*, 10(2), 332–340. (<https://doi.org/10.15379/ijmst.v10i2.1172>)
- Höll, J., Rief, W., & Euteneuer, F. (2023). Anomie, uncertainty, and mental health in times of social change: A sociological–psychological perspective. *Current Psychology*, 42(14), 11863–11874. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-022-03479-6>
- Jamalulel, I., & Chang, C.-L. (2025). Work-Life Balance And Career Development: How Job Satisfaction Mediates Their Impact On Turnover Intention Among Indonesian Generation Z? *International Journal of Business and Society*, 26(1), 10.33736/ijbs.8302.2025
- Kline, R. B. (2023). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling* (5th ed.). Guilford Press.
- Latupeirissa, J.J.P., & Cistadewi, N.M.W. (2025). Social Media Trends and FoMO Among Gen Z: A Systematic Literature Review. *Observatorio*, 19(1), 10.15847/obsobs19320252631
- Lestari, N.S., Zainal, V.R., Chan, S., & Nawangsari, L.C. (2024). Impact of career development, job insecurity, and tech awareness on the quiet quitting of hospitality employees in Indonesia. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, 22(2), 13-24. 10.21511/ppm.22(3).2024.33



- Özman, C., Uğraş, S., Sağın, A.E., ..., & Daşkesen, S.S. (2025). The mediating role of career concerns between career goal inconsistency, alienation and loneliness. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 16, 10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1670414
- Santilli, S., Ginevra, M. C., & Nota, L. (2024). Career adaptability, future anxiety, and well-being among emerging adults. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 147, 103915. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2023.103915>
- Santilli, S., Nota, L., & Ginevra, M. C. (2024). Career adaptability, future orientation, and career anxiety among young adults. *Journal of Career Development*, 51(1), 3–18. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08948453231123456>
- Schmitt, A., Zacher, H., & de Lange, A. H. (2022). Psychological alienation at work: Conceptualization, measurement, and outcomes. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 134, 103703. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2022.103703>
- Sharma, M., Kaushal, D., & Joshi, S. (2023). Adverse effect of social media on generation Z user's behavior: Government information support as a moderating variable. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 75, 103511. [10.1016/j.jretconser.2023.103256](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2023.103256)
- Twenge, J. M. (2023). *Generations: The real differences between Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, Boomers, and Silents*. Atria Books.
- Verduyn, P., Gugushvili, N., & Kross, E. (2023). Social media use and well-being: A systematic review of longitudinal studies. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 45, 101304. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsy.2022.101304>
- Vogel, E. A., Rose, J. P., Okdie, B. M., Eckles, K., & Franz, B. (2024). Social comparison, social media, and self-evaluation in emerging adulthood. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 149, 107938. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2023.107938>
- Yang, C., Holden, S. M., & Carter, M. D. K. (2022). Social media social comparison and identity distress among emerging adults. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 51(8), 1608–1622. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-022-01614-3>

