



## Role of Career Anxiety and Career Indecision on Psychological Well-being of Higher Education Students

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**Abstract :** This study aimed to explore the impact of career anxiety and career indecision on the psychological well-being of higher education students. Using a sample of 200 students aged 18–25, including both undergraduates and postgraduates, data were collected through the Career Uncertainty and Anxiety Questionnaire Gleeson (2020), Career Decision Scale (Osipow et al., 1976), and Ryff’s Psychological Well-being Scale (1989). Statistical analyses including t-tests, Pearson correlations, and multiple regression were used to assess group differences, relationships, and predictive roles among the variables. Results indicated no significant difference between undergraduates and postgraduates in career anxiety or psychological well-being, but undergraduates exhibited significantly higher career indecision. Career anxiety and career indecision were both significantly and negatively correlated with multiple aspects of psychological well-being, particularly self-acceptance, purpose in life, and personal growth. Regression analyses further revealed that psychological well-being significantly predicted career anxiety and indecision, with self-acceptance and personal growth being the strongest predictors. The findings highlight the importance of addressing career-related stressors through early intervention, career counselling, and well-being programs in academic settings.

**Keywords:** *Career Anxiety, Career Indecision, Psychological Well-Being, Higher Education Students, Undergraduate Students, Post Graduate Students*

## 1. Introduction

*Career indecision* is defined “as the inability to specify an educational or occupational choice” (Kelly & Lee, 2002). It often stems from a lack of readiness, insufficient information, or conflicting details that hinder sound career decision-making. This issue is especially common among students in higher education, where it becomes a key developmental challenge. Factors contributing to indecision include unclear self-identity, limited career knowledge, and external pressures such as job market uncertainty. There are two primary forms: developmental indecision, which is considered a normal part of exploration, and chronic indecision, which is more persistent and linked to personality traits. Various theories explain the causes of career indecision. Cognitive approaches point to deficits in decision-making skills or self-knowledge, while social-cognitive models highlight the influence of self-efficacy and perceived barriers. Decision-making styles and personal goals also shape career choices. Without proper guidance and support, many students struggle to align their abilities and interests with suitable career paths, often delaying decisions or experiencing ongoing uncertainty (Osipow, 1999).

Among college and university students, career indecision is common due to unclear self-identity, limited exposure to career information, and external pressures such as job market uncertainty and economic concerns. Many students also face anxiety about choosing the "wrong" career, which can lead to delayed decisions or lack of commitment. Access to career guidance and support plays a crucial role in helping students overcome these challenges and make informed career decisions.

*Career anxiety* encompasses the emotional tension, stress, and apprehension individuals feel when confronted with career-related choices, such as selecting a professional path, transitioning between roles, or entering the workforce. It is particularly common among adolescents and young adults who are expected to make significant life decisions during a period marked by identity formation and social pressure. This anxiety often stems from doubts about personal abilities, uncertainty about future outcomes, and the perceived expectations of others. Theoretical models such as the Trait and Factor Theory highlight how anxiety can emerge when individuals lack clarity about how their interests, values, and skills align with career opportunities. Similarly, the Theory of Planned Behaviour underscores the role of perceived behavioural control, when individuals feel they have little influence over their future or face pressure from external forces, anxiety tends to increase. A notable source of this pressure is family influence; many students experience anxiety when their career goals conflict with parental expectations or when they feel their autonomy is limited (Cetin Gunduz &

Nalbantoglu Yilmaz, 2016). These emotional struggles can hinder decision-making, lower self-confidence, and delay career planning, making it essential for educators and mental health professionals to address career anxiety as part of holistic student development.

*Psychological well-being* refers to “an individual's overall mental and emotional health, encompassing aspects like life satisfaction, emotional resilience, and the ability to cope with stress” (Ryff, 1989). Carol Ryff’s model outlines six core dimensions that support well-being: self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relationships, personal growth, and purpose in life. Achieving balance in these areas contributes to a meaningful and fulfilling life.

Various psychological theories offer different perspectives on well-being. The hedonic approach emphasizes pleasure and the avoidance of pain (Bentham, 1789), while Seligman’s PERMA model focuses on positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement (Seligman, 2011). Cognitive behavioral theory highlights how thoughts shape emotions and behavior, emphasizing the importance of healthy thinking patterns for long-term well-being (Beck, 1976).

Among higher education students, low psychological well-being is associated with stress, low self-esteem, and dissatisfaction, often leading to mental health challenges (Salman et al., 2022). University life introduces academic, personal, and social challenges, making students especially vulnerable during the transition phase. Therefore, promoting psychological well-being is essential for student success and long-term societal development (Liu, 2019).

## 2. Review Of Literature

Aminah et al. (2025) aim was to explore what factors lead students in high school to be undecided about their careers. The Career Decision Scale (CDS) was used to collect data from 413 students from the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Central Java, and East Java. The results show a wide range of career hesitation levels across people, with demographic factors having a substantial impact. Furthermore, every student said that choosing a career was challenging. The study emphasises the necessity of enhanced career counselling services and all-encompassing support networks to help students make professional decisions. It also highlights the importance of a supportive atmosphere, more chances, and family participation in reducing career indecision.

Zulfakar et al. (2024) examined the impact of future career anxiety on career indecision in students during the COVID-19 epidemic. The study suggested a paradigm linking career anxiety and indecision and included 170 undergraduate students from the Faculty of Hotel and

Tourism Management at UiTM Pulau Pinang Branch, with a response rate of 77.3%. The data demonstrated a positive association between future career anxiety and career indecision, implying that students faced significant anxiety about their future careers during the pandemic, resulting in increased indecision. The study also examined theoretical and practical consequences, as well as recommendations for further research

Yang et al. (2024) examined the relationship between indecision, anxiety, and vocational decision-making abilities among college students in Hunan, China. According to the study, students who liked their major were more indecisive, whereas men, urban students, only children, and non-left-behind students had better professional decision-making skills. Anxiety was lower in students who like their major, and it was discovered to somewhat moderate the association between indecision and career decision-making abilities. The study emphasises the role of societal and familial influences in job choices, as well as the importance of counselling therapies to alleviate anxiety and indecision in professional decision-making

Arslan (2022) studied 376 Turkish university students' psychological well-being and career decision-making were examined in relation to hope. The results, which were derived from path analysis and psychological scales, demonstrated that while negative affect was inversely correlated with all measures, career decidedness and hope had a significant positive impact on well-being. According to the analysis, hope was a key mediating factor, indicating that students who are more determined about their careers have higher levels of wellbeing and hope for the future. These findings highlight how crucial it is for career development programs to cultivate hope to improve students' general mental health and sense of fulfilment.

John et al. (2022) stated that young adults frequently must make a lot of decisions all at once, which can be quite stressful. In this study, 74 young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 are selected to examine the impact of indecision on psychological health. Convenience sampling was utilised to gather data from the sample population using the indecisiveness scale questionnaire created by Randy Frost and Deanna L. Shows (1993) and the psychological well-being scale (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). A correlational analysis was performed for analysis. The results showed a strong correlation between psychological health and indecisiveness itself. Therefore, it can be said that young adults' psychological wellbeing is impacted by indecision.

Yilmaz and Gunduz,(2018) The purpose of this study is to use structural equation modelling (SEM) to examine the relationship between high school students' career anxiety and career indecision, specifically career anxiety in relation to the influence of family and career choice. There were 444 students in the 11th and 12th grades in the study group. The Scale for Career Anxiety and Career Decision Inventory was used to gather research data. Based on the

developed model, it was determined that career anxiety was significantly impacted by career indecision with regard to the choice of profession and the impact on the family. To put it another way, high school students' scores on career anxiety increased in relation to the family effect as their scores on career indecision increased.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Aim**

To assess the role of career anxiety and career indecision on psychological well-being of higher education students.

#### **3.2 Research Objectives**

1. To compare the levels of career anxiety, career indecision, and psychological well-being between undergraduate and postgraduate students.
2. To examine the relationship between career anxiety and psychological well-being among higher education students.
3. To assess the relationship between career indecision and psychological well-being among higher education students.
4. To assess the predictive role of career anxiety and career indecision on psychological well-being among higher education students.

#### **3.3 Hypothesis**

1. There will be no significant difference in the level of career anxiety, career indecision and psychological well-being between undergraduate and postgraduate students.
2. There will be no significant relationship between career anxiety and psychological well-being among higher education students.
3. There will be no significant relationship between career indecision, psychological well-being among higher education students.
4. Career anxiety will predict psychological well-being among higher education students.
5. Career indecision will predict psychological well-being among higher education students.

#### **3.4 Research Design**

The study employed a quantitative cross-sectional research design to examine the role career anxiety and career indecision on psychological well-being of higher education students. Data were collected from 200 participants, including 100 postgraduate and 100 undergraduate students.

#### **3.5 Sample**

- a) Sample size: A total of 200 participants- 100 undergraduates and 100 postgraduates, ranging in age from 18 – 25 years.
- b) Sampling method: the current study used convenience and snowball sampling methods.

### 3.6 Measures

#### *Career Uncertainty and Anxiety Questionnaire (Gleeson, 2020)*

Gleeson (2020) created the 13-item Career Uncertainty and Anxiety Questionnaire as a self-report instrument to gauge students' emotional reactions to career path uncertainty. Career direction and purpose (items 1–4), career uncertainty and anxiety triggers (items 5–9), and feelings of career stress (items 10–13) comprise the three sections of the scale. Participants can indicate how strongly they feel about career planning by rating each item on a 5-point Likert scale, which goes from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5). Researchers, educators, and counsellors who assist students during academic or career transitions will find the scale especially helpful as it is primarily used to identify the presence and sources of anxiety and uncertainty related to careers. The internal consistency of the scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded an overall alpha of 0.87, indicating high reliability.

#### *Psychological Well-being scale ( Ryff, 1989)*

Carol Ryff created the Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS) in 1989 as a thorough self-report tool to evaluate various aspects of positive psychological functioning. The 18-item version of the scale is the most commonly used in research, though there are other versions as well. With seven items per dimension, it assesses the following six fundamental aspects of well-being: self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, environmental mastery, personal growth, autonomy, and purpose in life. On a 6-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "Strongly Disagree" and 6 denoting "Strongly Agree," respondents score each item. Greater well-being in that specific domain is indicated by higher scores on each subscale. total score for each subscale is calculated by summing the scores of the 7 items within that domain. Before scoring, specific items are reverse-coded. Reverse-scored items in the 18-item version include: 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 17, 18. The scale demonstrates good reliability, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.70 to 0.90 depending on the subscale and sample. Test-retest reliability has also been reported as satisfactory, suggesting consistency over time. In terms of validity, the PWBS shows strong construct validity.

#### *Career decision Scale (Osipow et al., 1976)*

The Career Decision Scale (CDS), developed by Osipow, Carney, Winer, Yanico, and Koschier in 1976, is a widely used psychometric tool designed to assess an individual's level of career decision-making difficulties and indecision. It aims to identify students or individuals who may need career counseling by exploring the degree of certainty and the reasons behind their uncertainty in making career choices. The scale consists of 19 items, of which two (Items 1 and 2) measure the level of career certainty and the remaining 17 items explore the various sources and dimensions of career indecision. Respondents rate each item on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "not at all like me" to "exactly like me," allowing for quantitative assessment of their decision-making challenges. The CDS has demonstrated good psychometric properties, with internal consistency (reliability) coefficients typically ranging from 0.86 to 0.90, indicating strong reliability. In terms of validity, the scale has been validated through its correlations with other career-related measures and successful identification of individuals experiencing decision-making difficulties. The CDS continues to be used in both research and practical settings for guiding career counseling interventions and for understanding the psychological factors affecting career choices.

#### 4. Statistical Analysis

**Table 1 .** *Independent t test, Mean and standard deviation between Undergraduate and Post-Graduate students*

| Variable                                            | Group | M     | SD    | t(df) | F      | p       |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|---------|
| <b>Certainty Scale</b>                              | UG    | 5.57  | 1.71  | -0.51 | 0.000  | .614    |
|                                                     | PG    | 5.45  | 1.65  |       |        |         |
| <b>Career Uncertainty and Anxiety Questionnaire</b> | UG    | 37.17 | 12.84 | -1.47 | 4.033  | .144    |
|                                                     | PG    | 34.67 | 11.19 |       |        |         |
| <b>Autonomy</b>                                     | UG    | 13.84 | 3.22  | 0.78  | 1.037  | .439    |
|                                                     | PG    | 14.18 | 2.97  |       |        |         |
| <b>Environmental Mastery</b>                        | UG    | 13.13 | 3.08  | 1.10  | 0.232  | .275    |
|                                                     | PG    | 13.59 | 2.85  |       |        |         |
| <b>Self-Acceptance</b>                              | UG    | 14.03 | 3.62  | 0.02  | 0.398  | .984    |
|                                                     | PG    | 14.04 | 3.48  |       |        |         |
| <b>Indecision Scale</b>                             | UG    | 38.32 | 12.48 | -2.59 | 11.489 | .010 ** |
|                                                     | PG    | 34.28 | 9.36  |       |        |         |

|                           |    |       |      |       |       |      |
|---------------------------|----|-------|------|-------|-------|------|
| <b>Purpose in Life</b>    | UG | 13.17 | 3.42 | -0.18 | 0.436 | .854 |
|                           | PG | 13.08 | 3.50 |       |       |      |
| <b>Personal Growth</b>    | UG | 14.85 | 3.38 | 1.87  | 1.301 | .063 |
|                           | PG | 15.75 | 3.44 |       |       |      |
| <b>Positive Relations</b> | UG | 12.66 | 3.13 | 0.90  | 5.147 | .369 |
|                           | PG | 13.10 | 3.76 |       |       |      |

**Table 1** indicates that there were no significant differences between undergraduate and postgraduate students on most of the variables under study. The  $t$ -values for group differences on the Certainty Scale ( $t = -0.51, p > .05$ ), Career Uncertainty and Anxiety Questionnaire ( $t = -1.47, p > .05$ ), Autonomy ( $t = 0.78, p > .05$ ), Environmental Mastery ( $t = 1.10, p > .05$ ), Self-Acceptance ( $t = 0.02, p > .05$ ), Purpose in Life ( $t = -0.18, p > .05$ ), Personal Growth ( $t = 1.87, p > .05$ ), and Positive Relations ( $t = 0.90, p > .05$ ) were all non-significant. However, a significant group difference was found for the Indecision Scale ( $t = -2.59, p = .010$ ), indicating that undergraduate students scored significantly higher on career indecision compared to postgraduate students.

**Table 2.** *Pearson correlation of Career Uncertainty and Anxiety, Career Indecision and Psychological well-being*

| Variables                    | Certainty Scale | Autonomy | Career Uncertainty and Anxiety Questionnaire | Environmental Mastery | Personal Growth | Positive Relations | Purpose in Life | Self-Acceptance | Indecision Scale |
|------------------------------|-----------------|----------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| <b>Certainty Scale</b>       | 1               |          |                                              |                       |                 |                    |                 |                 |                  |
| <b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>       | —               |          |                                              |                       |                 |                    |                 |                 |                  |
| <b>Autonomy</b>              | .125            | 1        |                                              |                       |                 |                    |                 |                 |                  |
| <b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>       | .078            | —        |                                              |                       |                 |                    |                 |                 |                  |
| <b>CUAQ</b>                  | -.413**         | -.321**  | 1                                            |                       |                 |                    |                 |                 |                  |
| <b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>       | .000            | .000     | —                                            |                       |                 |                    |                 |                 |                  |
| <b>Environmental Mastery</b> | .170*           | .406**   | -.323**                                      | 1                     |                 |                    |                 |                 |                  |
| <b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>       | .016            | .000     | .000                                         | —                     |                 |                    |                 |                 |                  |
| <b>Personal Growth</b>       | .214**          | .380**   | -.389**                                      | .338**                | 1               |                    |                 |                 |                  |
| <b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>       | .002            | .000     | .000                                         | .000                  | —               |                    |                 |                 |                  |
| <b>Positive Relations</b>    | .208**          | .204**   | -.298**                                      | .282**                | .391**          | 1                  |                 |                 |                  |
| <b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>       | .003            | .004     | .000                                         | .000                  | .000            | —                  |                 |                 |                  |
| <b>Purpose in Life</b>       | .162*           | .135     | -.286**                                      | .121                  | .417**          | .450**             | 1               |                 |                  |
| <b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>       | .022            | .057     | .000                                         | .088                  | .000            | .000               | —               |                 |                  |
| <b>Self Acceptance</b>       | .209**          | .396**   | -.463**                                      | .530**                | .303**          | .309**             | .218**          | 1               |                  |
| <b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>       | .003            | .000     | .000                                         | .000                  | .000            | .000               | .002            | —               |                  |

|                  |       |        |        |         |         |         |         |        |   |
|------------------|-------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|---|
| Indecision Scale | -.129 | .295** | .676** | -.235** | -.498** | -.338** | -.435** | .376** | 1 |
| Sig. 2-tailed    | .068  | .000   | .000   | .001    | .000    | .000    | .000    | .000   | — |

*N* = 200 for all correlations.

Pearson Correlation is shown above, with significance values (2-tailed) below.

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 2** Indicates that there is a significant positive correlation between the Certainty Scale and Environmental Mastery ( $r = .170, p < .05$ ), Personal Growth ( $r = .214, p < .01$ ), Positive Relations ( $r = .208, p < .01$ ), Purpose in Life ( $r = .162, p < .05$ ), and Self-Acceptance ( $r = .209, p < .01$ ). A significant negative correlation was found between the Certainty Scale and Career Uncertainty and Anxiety ( $r = -.413, p < .01$ ). No significant correlation was found between the Certainty Scale and Autonomy ( $r = .125, p > .05$ ) or Indecision Scale ( $r = -.129, p > .05$ ).

**Table 3.** Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Psychological Well-Being from Career Indecision

| Predictor             | B      | SE B | $\beta$ |
|-----------------------|--------|------|---------|
| Constant              | 74.12  | 4.16 | —       |
| Autonomy              | -0.27  | 0.24 | -0.07   |
| Purpose in Life       | -0.76  | 0.22 | -0.24   |
| Self-Acceptance       | -0.69  | 0.23 | -0.22   |
| Environmental Mastery | 0.21   | 0.27 | 0.06    |
| Positive Relations    | -0.15  | 0.22 | -0.05   |
| Personal Growth       | -1.00  | 0.23 | -0.31   |
| $R^2$                 | .361   |      |         |
| F                     | 18.158 |      |         |

**Table 3** indicates that the model significantly predicted career anxiety,  $F(6, df) = 18.158, p < .001$ , accounting for approximately 36.1% of the variance ( $R^2 = .361$ ). Among the predictors, *Purpose in Life* ( $\beta = -0.24, p = .001$ ), *Self-Acceptance* ( $\beta = -0.22, p = .003$ ), and *Personal Growth* ( $\beta = -0.31, p < .001$ ) were significant negative predictors of career anxiety. This suggests that lower levels in these dimensions of psychological well-being are associated with higher levels of career anxiety. Other variables, including *Autonomy*, *Environmental Mastery*, and *Positive Relations*, did not significantly contribute to the prediction of career anxiety.

**Table 4.** *Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Psychological Well-Being from career certainty*

| Predictor             | B      | SE B  | $\beta$ (Beta) |
|-----------------------|--------|-------|----------------|
| (Constant)            | 2.765  | 0.747 | —              |
| Autonomy              | -0.003 | 0.044 | -0.005         |
| Purpose in Life       | 0.020  | 0.040 | 0.041          |
| Self-Acceptance       | 0.055  | 0.040 | 0.116          |
| Environmental Mastery | 0.022  | 0.048 | 0.040          |
| Positive Relations    | 0.048  | 0.040 | 0.100          |
| Personal Growth       | 0.054  | 0.041 | 0.111          |
| $R^2$                 | 0.082  |       |                |
| F                     | 2.855  |       |                |

**Table 4** indicates that career certainty from dimensions of psychological well-being was statistically significant,  $F(6, df) = 2.855$ ,  $p = .012$ , explaining 8.2% of the variance in career certainty ( $R^2 = .082$ ). However, none of the individual psychological well-being variables significantly predicted career certainty at the  $p < .05$  level. The strongest (though non-significant) positive predictors were *Self-Acceptance* ( $\beta = 0.116$ ) and *Personal Growth* ( $\beta = 0.111$ ), suggesting a small trend, but further research is needed to clarify their influence.

**Table 5.** *Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Psychological Well-Being from career uncertainty and anxiety*

| Predictor             | B      | SE B  | $\beta$ (Beta) |
|-----------------------|--------|-------|----------------|
| (Constant)            | 74.573 | 4.697 | —              |
| Autonomy              | -0.345 | 0.274 | -0.088         |
| Purpose in Life       | -0.342 | 0.249 | -0.098         |
| Self-Acceptance       | -1.082 | 0.254 | -0.317         |
| Environmental Mastery | -0.114 | 0.304 | -0.028         |
| Positive Relations    | -0.197 | 0.249 | -0.056         |
| Personal Growth       | -0.659 | 0.259 | -0.187         |
| $R^2$                 | 0.302  |       |                |
| F                     | 13.906 |       |                |

**Table 5** indicates that predicting career indecision from dimensions of psychological well-being was statistically significant,  $F(6, df) = 13.906$ ,  $p < .001$ , explaining 30.2% of the variance ( $R^2 = .302$ ). *Self-Acceptance* ( $\beta = -0.317$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and *Personal Growth* ( $\beta = -0.187$ ,  $p = .012$ ) emerged as significant negative predictors of career indecision, indicating that students with

lower self-acceptance and personal growth reported higher levels of indecision. Other variables did not significantly predict career indecision.

## 5. Discussion

The present study aimed to explore how career anxiety and career indecision influence the psychological well-being of students in higher education. One key objective was to examine whether differences existed between undergraduate and postgraduate students in these areas. Findings indicated that undergraduate students exhibited significantly higher levels of career indecision than postgraduates. This can be attributed to their limited exposure to career paths and lower self-awareness regarding future goals. Although undergraduates also reported higher levels of career anxiety, the difference was not statistically significant, suggesting that both groups experience similar emotional strain when facing career-related uncertainties. Interestingly, no significant difference emerged in psychological well-being scores between the two groups, implying that well-being may depend more on personal and contextual factors rather than academic level (Ryff, 1989). A significant negative correlation was found between career anxiety and psychological well-being. Students with high anxiety about their career future scored lower in domains such as purpose in life, self-acceptance, and personal growth. This aligns with previous research indicating that heightened career-related anxiety can adversely affect mental health and overall satisfaction (Savickas, 2013). Similarly, career indecision was found to negatively correlate with all aspects of psychological well-being. Students who were uncertain or hesitant in making career choices reported reduced emotional resilience and struggled with internal clarity and goal-setting. Prior research has shown that indecision may hinder personal development and increase psychological stress (Gati, Levin, & Landman, 2011), making it a critical factor in student well-being. In terms of prediction, both career anxiety and indecision significantly influenced psychological well-being.

Career indecision, in particular, accounted for a notable proportion of variance, with personal growth, purpose in life, and self-acceptance emerging as strong predictors. Students with a stronger sense of identity and direction experienced fewer struggles in decision-making, underscoring the role of internal strengths in managing career uncertainty. This supports the Social Cognitive Career Theory, which posits that self-perception and goal clarity play a pivotal role in career-related decisions. Surprisingly, the certainty subscale showed no significant association with psychological well-being, suggesting that confidence in one's career choice may be more influenced by external factors such as internships, family support, or career guidance rather than internal psychological states (Creed et al., 2009). Finally,

psychological well-being was found to be a significant negative predictor of career anxiety. Students who reported higher self-acceptance and growth orientation experienced lower levels of anxiety concerning their career future. This reinforces the idea that mental well-being acts as a buffer against the stressors associated with career planning. Although environmental mastery and autonomy did not emerge as strong predictors, their indirect influence cannot be ruled out, especially in shaping coping strategies and decision-making confidence. Overall, these findings highlight the importance of comprehensive career support systems that not only provide information and resources but also strengthen students' internal coping mechanisms. Integrating mental health counselling with career services could help students reduce indecision and anxiety while fostering a more optimistic and confident outlook toward their future.

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study emphasizes the significant influence of career anxiety and career indecision on the psychological well-being of students in higher education. Although no notable difference was found in career anxiety between undergraduate and postgraduate students, undergraduates exhibited significantly higher levels of career indecision, suggesting that less exposure and experience may hinder their ability to make informed career choices. Both career anxiety and career indecision were negatively associated with critical dimensions of psychological well-being, particularly self-acceptance, purpose in life, and personal growth. Regression findings demonstrated that career indecision was a strong predictor of lower well-being, while career certainty showed no significant relationship, implying that external factors such as real-world exposure and support systems may play a greater role in developing certainty. Additionally, the results underscore that students with stronger psychological resources tend to experience less anxiety and indecision regarding their career paths. These insights highlight the necessity of integrating targeted psychological and career support services within academic settings to promote student well-being and improve their decision-making capacity during transitional educational stages.

### 6.1 Limitations

Since the study was limited to the Delhi-NCR region, the findings may not be generalizable. Students from different sections of the country may display varying psychological and academic patterns due to cultural, socioeconomic, or institutional differences. Secondly, the sample size was only 200 college students, which may not be

representative of the overall student population. A bigger sample size could have increased the reliability and application of the findings.

### 6.3 Implication and future suggestions

First and foremost, educational institutions ought to improve their career counselling programs to help students deal with anxiety and career indecision, especially for undergraduates who displayed higher levels of indecision. Second, enhancing students' psychological well-being can be greatly aided by the implementation of well-being workshops that emphasise fostering self-acceptance and personal development. Thirdly, students who have high levels of career anxiety may benefit from early detection and support, which could stop mental health problems from getting worse. Additionally, different guidance strategies should be used for undergraduates and postgraduates, considering the variations in career indecision among educational levels. Finally, incorporating career planning and mental health awareness into the academic curriculum as part of a holistic education can support students' overall growth and prepare them for challenges in the future.

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