

Academic resilience and career anxiety as predictors of career decision-making self-efficacy of pre-service teachers

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Abstract: The uncertainty surrounding recruitment policies and professional teacher education creates intense psychological pressure for pre-service teachers during their post-graduation transition. This study maps the levels of Academic Resilience (AR), Career Anxiety (CA), and Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDSE) while examining the predictive roles of AR and CA in CDSE among primary school pre-service teachers. Employing a quantitative predictive correlational design, researchers collected data from 145 final-year students using adapted online questionnaires: the ARS-30, Career Anxiety Scale, and CDSE-SF. Descriptive analysis reveals that most students exhibit high AR, moderate CA, and high CDSE. Multiple linear regression showed that AR and CA jointly explained 36.4% of the variance in CDSE ($F = 42.250$, $p < .001$). Academic Resilience showed a significant positive predictive association with CDSE ($\beta = 0.422$, $p < 0.001$), whereas Career Anxiety showed a significant negative predictive association with CDSE ($\beta = -0.340$, $p < 0.001$). These findings suggest that academic resilience may help offset the negative effects of career anxiety on students' career confidence. Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) could strengthen their career guidance services by incorporating emotion-regulation and problem-solving support to help build pre-service teachers' career confidence.

Keywords: Academic resilience, anxiety, pre-service teachers, post-graduation transition

Abstrak: Ketidakpastian kebijakan rekrutmen dan pendidikan profesi guru menciptakan tekanan psikologis yang intens bagi calon guru pada masa transisi pascakelulusan. Penelitian ini memetakan tingkat *Academic Resilience* (AR), *Career Anxiety* (CA), dan *Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy* (CDSE) sekaligus menguji peran prediktif AR dan CA terhadap CDSE pada mahasiswa calon guru sekolah dasar. Menggunakan desain kuantitatif korelasional prediktif, peneliti mengumpulkan data dari 145 mahasiswa tingkat akhir melalui kuesioner daring adaptasi: ARS-30, *Career Anxiety Scale*, dan CDSE-SF. Analisis deskriptif mengungkap bahwa mayoritas mahasiswa menunjukkan AR tinggi, CA sedang, dan CDSE tinggi. Uji regresi linear berganda mengonfirmasi bahwa AR dan CA secara simultan menjelaskan 36,4% varians pada CDSE ($F=42,250$; $p<0,001$). Secara parsial, AR menunjukkan hubungan prediktif positif yang signifikan dengan CDSE ($\beta = 0,422$; $p < 0,001$), sedangkan CA menunjukkan hubungan prediktif negatif yang signifikan dengan CDSE ($\beta = -0,340$; $p < 0,001$). Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa resiliensi akademik dapat membantu meredam efek negatif kecemasan karier terhadap keyakinan karier mahasiswa. Lembaga Pendidikan Tenaga Kependidikan (LPTK) dapat memperkuat layanan bimbingan karier mereka dengan memasukkan dukungan regulasi emosi dan pemecahan masalah untuk membangun keyakinan karier calon guru.

Kata kunci: Resiliensi akademik, kecemasan, calon guru, transisi pasca-kelulusan

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INTRODUCTION

Primary school pre-service teachers in Indonesia are completing their studies during a period of major change in teacher recruitment and certification. Three changes are particularly relevant. First, the government has increasingly recruited new public-school teachers as contract-based government employees rather than as permanent civil servants,

which offers graduates less long-term job security (Baharuddin & Burhan, 2025; Republic of Indonesia, 2023). Second, completion of the Pre-service Teacher Professional Education programme has become the main route to teacher certification, but admission to the programme is selective and limited by quotas, so a teaching degree no longer guarantees access to certification (Chang et al., 2025; Kurniadi, 2025). Third, the phasing out of non-permanent honorary positions has closed an informal entry route that many graduates previously used while waiting for a formal appointment (Republic of Indonesia, 2023; Sain et al., 2024).

These changes directly affect final-year students in the Primary School Teacher Education (PSTE) programme. Instead of following a predictable path from graduation to employment, they must pass a competitive selection for professional education, compete for a limited number of government appointments, and accept that their first positions may be temporary. Studies of Indonesian education reform show that such structural uncertainty can weaken students' career aspirations, professional motivation, and expectations after graduation (Baharuddin & Burhan, 2025; Cahyawulan et al., 2026). At the same time, these students are completing their final projects and teaching practicums, which adds academic pressure to an already uncertain transition (Purwasih et al., 2025). This combination of demands is often described as a quarter-life crisis, a phase in which young adults struggle with questions about adult roles, financial independence, and career success (Alamsyah et al., 2025; Ogunsemi, 2025).

A key psychological resource during this transition is Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDSE). Taylor and Betz (1983) define CDSE as an individual's belief that he or she can successfully complete the tasks needed to make career decisions, namely appraising one's abilities, gathering occupational information, selecting goals, making plans, and solving problems when barriers arise. In Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), self-efficacy is a central determinant of career behaviour: people with stronger efficacy beliefs are more likely to explore options, set goals, and persist when obstacles appear (Lent et al., 1994). Students with low CDSE, in contrast, tend to experience more career decision-making difficulties (Kim, 2022; Pignault et al., 2023), and these difficulties change across developmental stages (Dević et al., 2026). CDSE also predicts career adaptability in higher education students (Zhang et al., 2025), so it is a useful indicator of how ready final-year PSTE students are to act on their career plans.

SCCT also provides a reason why academic resilience and career anxiety should be linked to CDSE. According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy arises from four sources: mastery experiences, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and physiological and affective states (Lent et al., 1994). Academic resilience is primarily associated with the first of these sources. Students who continue despite academic setbacks and recover from them gain evidence that they can cope with difficulties, and this kind of evidence boosts their confidence when dealing with career tasks (Alkal, 2025). Career anxiety is linked to the fourth source. As Bandura (1997) states, people interpret intense negative arousal as an indication of personal inadequacy, so those who are anxious tend to have a more pessimistic view of their own capabilities. It is therefore expected that academic resilience will positively predict CDSE while career anxiety will negatively predict CDSE.

Career anxiety means continually worrying about one's future job and long-term job security (Pisarik et al., 2017). Pre-service teachers may be particularly susceptible to it since

teacher recruitment is competitive and the professional standards keep on changing (Kara et al., 2024; Shi, 2023). Empirical studies have confirmed the negative relationship that was predicted by the SCCT. Dou et al. (2026) found that CDSE was closely associated with employment anxiety among graduates, and Takil and Sari (2021) showed that career anxiety takes up the attentional resources that students need in order to process career information. Liu et al. (2026) also found that pre-service teachers' CDSE depends on the way they cope with the possibility of failure. As a result, students who have high levels of career anxiety may doubt their own abilities and delay making career decisions even if they are qualified.

Yet a great many students still retain their confidence and cope well even in the face of academic pressure and uncertainty about the labour market, indicating that their internal resources help to protect them from stress related to their careers (Alkal, 2025; Lee & Sung, 2023). One of these resources is academic resilience. This means a student's ability to stay engaged and to recover when encountering difficulties in an academic context (Cai & Meng, 2025; Cassidy, 2016; Nuraini et al., 2025). Students with higher levels of academic resilience show maintained motivation and adaptive functioning during times of stress (Awais et al., 2024; Ross et al., 2024), including those who are studying for licensure (Abaya et al., 2026), although these patterns can vary according to gender (Amoadu et al., 2024). For that reason, teacher education programmes should not only focus on improving their pedagogical skills but also on enhancing their students' ability to deal with assessment and uncertainty (Rajasekaran et al., 2024).

Previous studies, however, have usually examined these factors separately. Zhang et al. (2025) showed that proactive personality, CDSE, and social support predicted career adaptability, but their model did not include negative emotional states. Dou et al. (2026) examined CDSE and employment anxiety among graduates in general without considering academic resilience. Lee & Sung (2023) reported that career resilience and CDSE were related among pre-service early childhood teachers, but their study focused on the motivation for choosing teaching at entry rather than on the demands that arise near graduation. As a result, little is known about how a protective resource and a risk factor jointly relate to CDSE among graduating pre-service teachers who face the policy conditions described above.

The present study addresses this gap by testing academic resilience as a protective resource and career anxiety as a risk factor in a single predictive model of CDSE among final-year PSTE students. Examining the two predictors together shows the unique contribution of each while controlling for the other, which separate analyses cannot do. The findings are expected to give Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) empirical evidence for designing career guidance that addresses both students' psychological strengths and their career-related worries.

Guided by this theoretical and empirical foundation, this study executes three specific objectives:

1. To describe the levels of Academic Resilience, Career Anxiety, and Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy among final-year PSTE students.
2. To examine whether Academic Resilience predicts Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy among final-year PSTE students.

3. To examine whether Career Anxiety predicts Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy among final-year PSTE students.

METHOD

Research design

The study uses a quantitative approach which is grounded in a predictive and correlational (ex-post facto) design so as to examine the relationship between the independent variables, Academic Resilience and Career Anxiety, and the dependent variable, CDSE, under normal conditions without altering or treating the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Research participants

The participants were students of the Primary School Teacher Education (PSTE) Study Program from the 2022, 2023, and 2024 cohorts. These students are moving from the academic environment to the professional world, a stage that involves consolidating their professional interests, completing their final projects, preparing for selection into the Pre-service Teacher Professional Education programme, and orienting themselves towards the workforce.

So that each cohort would be properly represented, a proportionate stratified random sampling method was used and this led to 145 valid responses to the online questionnaire. In order to meet the ethical requirements of the study, an informed consent form was included on the first page of the questionnaire to ensure that participation was voluntary, to protect the confidentiality of the respondents, and to make it clear to the participants that they had the right to withdraw at any time.

Research instruments

The main data were collected by means of a questionnaire which used a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). In order to ensure that the measurement was valid in the local context, a cross-cultural adaptation procedure was carried out, this involving the forward translation and back-translation of the original questionnaires. The following three main instruments were employed:

The Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale Short Form (CDSE-SF; Betz et al., 1996) measured students' confidence in performing career decision-making tasks. It contains 25 items in five dimensions: self-appraisal, occupational information, goal selection, planning, and problem-solving. In the original validation study, the total scale showed high internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.94$), and the subscale coefficients ranged from 0.73 to 0.83 (Betz et al., 1996).

The Academic Resilience Scale (ARS-30; Cassidy, 2016) measured resilience in an academic context. Respondents first read a vignette describing an academic setback, which in this study was adapted to a situation relevant to pre-service teachers, and then rated 30 items covering three dimensions: perseverance, reflecting and adaptive help-seeking, and negative affect and emotional response. Cassidy (2016) confirmed this three-factor structure and reported high internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.90$).

The Career Anxiety Scale (Tsai et al., 2017) measured the sources of students' career anxiety through 25 items in four dimensions: personal ability, irrational beliefs about

employment, employment environment, and professional education and training. The scale was developed through exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, and the original study reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.76 to 0.89 across the four dimensions (Tsai et al., 2017).

Content validity was evaluated by two experts in educational psychology, who rated the relevance of each item for Indonesian primary school pre-service teachers on a five-point scale. The ratings were analysed using Aiken's V (Aiken, 1985). All 80 items obtained Aiken's V coefficients ranging from 0.75 to 1.00, with mean coefficients of 0.935 for the CDSE-SF, .933 for the ARS-30, and .925 for the Career Anxiety Scale. These results indicate a high degree of agreement between the experts regarding item relevance and contextual appropriateness. At the item level, internal consistency was further examined in the research sample ($N = 145$) using corrected item-total correlations, with 0.30 as the reference criterion (Azwar, 2012). All CDSE-SF items met this criterion (0.494 to 0.800). In the ARS-30, the correlations ranged from -0.067 to 0.600 , and eight items fell below 0.30 (items 1, 2, 3, 8, 11, 13, 23, and 24). In the Career Anxiety Scale, the correlations ranged from 0.053 to 0.612 , with eight items falling below 0.30. These items were retained to preserve the factor structure and content coverage of the original validated instruments and because their retention was supported by the prior expert review. Accordingly, the corrected item-total coefficients were treated as diagnostic evidence of item-level internal consistency rather than as the sole basis for item deletion. Internal consistency was examined using Cronbach's alpha, with 0.70 as the minimum acceptable coefficient (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The coefficients were $\alpha = 0.957$ for the CDSE-SF, $\alpha = 0.852$ for the ARS-30, and $\alpha = 0.880$ for the Career Anxiety Scale, indicating good to excellent internal consistency.

Data analysis procedures and techniques

The data were processed and analysed in two main stages using SPSS version 27: first with descriptive statistical analysis and then with inferential statistical analysis. In the first stage, descriptive statistical analysis was carried out in order to show the participants' demographic characteristics and to illustrate the variation in the data by means of the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values. The respondents' scores were divided into high, medium, and low categories according to the normal distribution norms developed by Azwar (2012): those with a score above the Hypothetical Mean plus one Hypothetical Standard Deviation were classified as high, those with a score within one Standard Deviation of the Hypothetical Mean were considered medium, and those with a score below the Hypothetical Mean minus one Standard Deviation were regarded as low. Furthermore, the empirical mean for each item was calculated in order to determine the most significant indicator for each variable.

In the second stage, Multiple Linear Regression was applied in order to examine the predictive hypotheses. Prior to carrying out the hypothesis testing, the classical regression assumptions were checked: residual normality was examined by means of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the linear relationship between the variables was investigated using the Deviation from Linearity test, multicollinearity was evaluated using Tolerance (with a minimum threshold of 0.10) and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) (with a maximum threshold of 10.00) values, and heteroscedasticity was tested with the Glejser test.

A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was adopted as the basis for the hypothesis testing. In order to evaluate the goodness of fit of the entire regression model, the F-test was applied, and then the t-test was used to examine the direction and significance of the predictive association between each independent variable and Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy. The Adjusted R Square value was also examined in order to find out what proportion of the variance in the dependent variable was accounted for by the independent variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistical analysis

The final analytical sample consisted of 145 active Primary School Teacher Education (PSTE) students. Females make up the majority of the sample, accounting for 125 individuals (86.2%). Males make up the remaining 20 participants (13.8%). Among the academic cohorts, the 2023 group is the largest, with 92 students (63.4%). The 2022 and 2024 cohorts follow with 29 students (20.0%) and 24 students (16.6%), respectively, as detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Participant demographic profile

Characteristics	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	20	13.8
	Female	125	86.2
Cohort	2022	29	20.0
	2023	92	63.4
	2024	24	16.6
Total		145	100

Descriptive statistics for the three constructs showed an empirical mean of 118.70 for Academic Resilience, 83.64 for Career Anxiety, and 98.29 for Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDSE). Skewness and kurtosis values for all variables fell within the ± 1 range, consistent with a normal data distribution, as summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of research variables

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Academic Resilience (X1)	145	118.70	13.028	-0.161	-0.538
Career Anxiety (X2)	145	83.64	14.138	0.107	-0.442
CDSE (Y)	145	98.29	15.275	0.043	-0.559

Categorizing individual scores into high, moderate, and low levels shows that 105 participants (72.4%) report high Academic Resilience, while 102 individuals (70.3%) report a moderate level of Career Anxiety about future employment, and 38 students (26.2%) report high anxiety. For career planning confidence, 96 participants (66.2%) report high CDSE, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Frequency distribution and categorization of research variables

Variable	Category	Score Range	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Academic Resilience	High	$X > 110$	105	72.4
	Moderate	$70 \leq X \leq 110$	40	27.6
	Low	$X < 70$	0	0.0
Career Anxiety	High	$X > 91.67$	38	26.2
	Moderate	$58.33 \leq X \leq 91.67$	102	70.3
	Low	$X < 58.33$	5	3.4
CDSE	High	$X > 91.67$	96	66.2
	Moderate	$58.33 \leq X \leq 91.67$	48	33.1
	Low	$X < 58.33$	1	0.7

The empirical mean per item identifies the most prominent indicator within each variable dimension (Table 4). Reflecting and Adaptive Help-Seeking has the highest average score within Academic Resilience (4.27). Personal Ability has the highest mean within Career Anxiety (4.14). For CDSE, Goal Selection and Problem-Solving are tied for the highest mean score (3.97).

Table 4. Statistical description of variable dimensions

Variable and Dimension	Empirical Mean	SD	Mean Per Item
Academic Resilience (AR)			
1. Reflecting and Adaptive Help-Seeking	38.41	4.59	4.27
2. Perseverance	55.92	6.14	3.99
3. Negative Affect and Emotional Response	24.36	5.82	3.48
Career Anxiety (CA)			
1. Personal Ability	33.12	5.48	4.14
2. Employment Environment	18.38	4.50	3.68
3. Professional Education Training	10.92	4.14	2.73
4. Irrational Beliefs	21.22	7.47	2.65
Career Decision Self-Efficacy (CDSE)			
1. Goal Selection	19.85	3.54	3.97
2. Problem-Solving	19.85	3.20	3.97
3. Self-Appraisal	19.76	3.44	3.95
4. Planning	19.51	3.66	3.90
5. Occupational Information	19.32	3.55	3.86

Inferential statistical analysis

Classical assumption tests were conducted prior to hypothesis testing. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test produced a test statistic of 0.059 with a significance value of 0.677, above the 0.05 threshold, indicating that the regression model's residuals were normally distributed (Table 5).

Table 5. Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test results

Parameter	Unstandardized Residual
N	145
Test Statistic	0.059
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.677

The linearity assumption was also tested. The Deviation from Linearity test produced significance values of 0.839 for Academic Resilience and 0.100 for Career Anxiety, both above the 0.05 threshold, indicating a linear relationship between each predictor and CDSE (Table 6).

Table 6. Linearity test results (deviation from linearity)

Variable Relationship	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
CDSE * Academic Resilience	7238.597	50	144.772	0.774	0.839
CDSE * Career Anxiety	10844.541	48	225.928	1.363	0.100

Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were examined to assess multicollinearity. Both independent variables produced Tolerance values of 0.923 (above the 0.10 minimum) and VIF values of 1.083 (below the 10.00 threshold), indicating no multicollinearity between Academic Resilience and Career Anxiety (Table 7).

Table 7. Multicollinearity test results

Independent Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Academic Resilience (X1)	0.923	1.083
Career Anxiety (X2)	0.923	1.083

The Glejser test was used to assess homoscedasticity. Significance values of 0.472 for Academic Resilience and 0.275 for Career Anxiety, both above 0.05, indicate that the assumption of homoscedasticity was met (Table 8).

Table 8. Heteroscedasticity test results (Glejser test)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.699	0.086	0.931
Academic Resilience	0.037	0.722	0.472
Career Anxiety	0.051	1.096	0.275

With the classical assumptions met, Multiple Linear Regression testing proceeded. The ANOVA results produced an F-statistic of 42.250, with a significance value of ($p < 0.001$), indicating that the regression model has an acceptable goodness of fit (Table 9).

Table 9. Model feasibility test results (ANOVA)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	12535.057	2	6267.529	42.250	< 0.001
Residual	21064.777	142	148.344		
Total	33599.834	144			

The model summary shows an Adjusted R Square of 0.364, indicating that Academic Resilience and Career Anxiety jointly account for 36.4% of the variance in CDSE scores. The remaining 63.6% of the variance was not explained by the predictors included in the present model, as presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Coefficient of determination test results (model summary)

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.611	0.373	0.364	12.180

The partial coefficients support both hypotheses. Academic Resilience is a significant positive predictor of CDSE ($t = 6.102$, $p < 0.001$) with a standardized beta of 0.422, suggesting that higher academic resilience is associated with greater confidence in career decision-making. Career Anxiety, in contrast, is a significant negative predictor ($t = -4.912$, $p < 0.001$) with a standardized beta of -0.340, suggesting that higher career anxiety is associated with lower self-efficacy in career planning (Table 11). To check whether these results depended on the items with low item-total correlations, the regression was repeated without the eight ARS-30 items and the eight Personal Ability items. Both predictors remained significant in the same direction (Academic Resilience: $\beta = 0.366$, $t = 5.349$, $p < 0.001$; Career Anxiety: $\beta = -0.430$, $t = -6.294$, $p < 0.001$; Adjusted $R^2 = .439$), so the conclusions did not depend on these items.

Table 11. Partial hypothesis test results (coefficients)

Model	Unstandardized B	Standardized Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	70.256		5.451	< 0.001
Academic Resilience (X1)	0.495	0.422	6.102	< 0.001
Career Anxiety (X2)	-0.367	-0.340	-4.912	< 0.001

Psychological readiness and career transition

The descriptive analysis showed that most final-year PSTE students had high academic resilience (72.4%) and high CDSE (66.2%), whereas most of them reported a moderate level of career anxiety (70.3%) and about one in four reported high anxiety (26.2%). In other words, the majority of students were fairly confident about making career decisions even though they still felt uncertain about their professional future. This profile fits the situation of final-year students who are completing their theses and teaching practicums while anticipating a competitive recruitment process (Purwasih et al., 2025). It is also consistent with Cahyawulan et al. (2026), who found that graduates' decisions to enter teaching depend on both their personal values and their perception of the social environment, so that confidence and concern can exist side by side.

At the dimension level, Personal Ability had the highest mean per item (4.14), followed by Employment Environment (3.68), while Irrational Beliefs had the lowest (2.65). The Personal Ability items state that students would not worry about their future jobs if they had certain competencies, such as professional certificates, foreign language proficiency, interview skills, computer skills, and leadership experience. The high score therefore shows that students strongly believe these competencies would secure their employment. However, this dimension was not positively related to the other anxiety

dimensions ($r = -.14$) and was positively related to CDSE ($r = .28, p < .001$), which suggests that it reflected students' expectations about the value of skills more than direct worry. In SCCT terms, this belief resembles an outcome expectation, that is, the expectation that acquiring skills will lead to employment (Lent et al., 1994). Students' more direct worries concerned the employment environment, such as economic recession, labour-market competition, and unemployment. The combination of high CDSE and moderate anxiety suggests that psychological readiness for employment does not require the complete absence of uncertainty. It may depend more on whether students have adaptive resources to manage their concerns (Zhang et al., 2025).

Academic resilience and career anxiety as predictors of CDSE

The regression analysis indicated that academic resilience was a significant positive predictor of CDSE ($\beta = 0.422, t = 6.102, p < 0.001$). Students who had higher levels of academic resilience expressed greater confidence when making career decisions. Of the different aspects of resilience, Reflecting and Adaptive Help-Seeking had the highest mean score per item (4.27), this showing that resilient pre-service teachers tend to look back on their previous setbacks, alter their ineffective strategies, and ask for help from lecturers and peers rather than avoiding problems. This finding supports the SCCT idea that mastery experiences enhance self-efficacy (Lent et al., 1994). Every academic difficulty that students overcome, for example by revising their thesis or addressing feedback from their practicum, serves as evidence that they are also capable of dealing with career-related tasks. This result is in agreement with Alkal (2025), whose longitudinal data demonstrated that resilience predicted both CDSE and career adaptability, and with Cai and Meng (2025), who found that academic resilience and teacher support contributed to student success.

In contrast, career anxiety was a significant negative predictor of CDSE ($\beta = -0.340, t = -4.912, p < 0.001$). The more anxious students were about their careers, the lower their confidence was in making career decisions. Those who are concerned about competition, unemployment, or their readiness for work will probably find it more difficult to assess career options, set realistic goals, and commit themselves to a professional path. This finding supports the SCCT idea that negative affective states reduce self-efficacy appraisals (Bandura, 1997; Lent et al., 1994). It also coincides with the results of Dou et al. (2026), who found that employment anxiety was linked to lower CDSE among graduates looking for jobs, and with those of Takil and Sari (2021), who demonstrated that career anxiety takes up the attentional resources that are needed for processing career information and for planning. That said, moderate anxiety is not always harmful since it can encourage students to look for information and make preparations. Liu et al. (2026) reached a similar conclusion, showing that concern about failure does not always have a negative impact on CDSE among pre-service teachers.

Academic resilience and career anxiety together accounted for 36.4% of the variation in CDSE (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.364; F = 42.250, p < 0.001$). When both predictors were included in the model, each of them remained statistically significant, indicating that each one makes a separate contribution and that the two situations can occur together. For instance, a pre-service teacher might recover rapidly from a severe academic assessment and yet still experience considerable anxiety about being recruited by the civil service. This finding is consistent with previous research which has shown that teacher appointment policies

influence pre-service teachers' anxiety about unemployment (Kara et al., 2024). The other 63.6% of the variation in CDSE was not accounted for by the model, implying that other factors—such as professional identity, social support, financial circumstances, occupational choice patterns (Bowling & Wakeling, 2025), and local employment opportunities—also affect career confidence. Thus, the current model provides only a partial explanation of career decision-making.

Implications for teacher education

These findings have practical implications for Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs). Because students strongly believed that concrete competencies would secure their employment, TEIs could help them build these competencies through certification preparation, interview practice, and foreign language, computer, and leadership training, in addition to microteaching, structured mentoring, and reflective practice that allow them to test their teaching skills and receive feedback before entering full-time work. In line with the SCCT emphasis on mastery experiences and social persuasion (Lent et al., 1994), feedback from lecturers and mentor teachers is most useful when it identifies specific strengths and areas for improvement instead of offering general praise or criticism.

Because academic resilience was a significant positive predictor, career guidance services could also add psychological support to the recruitment information they already provide. Information about recruitment schedules and vacancies is necessary, but it may not reduce students' deeper worries about their competence. Transition programmes that combine realistic career information, emotion-regulation strategies, and structured contact with school principals and recruitment officers may prepare students better. Such programmes should also align students' aspirations with actual labour-market conditions (OECD, 2025), be part of the continuous improvement of pre-service programme design (Cabreros & Barbacena, 2024), and include workshops that build resilience and teaching competence together (Rajasekaran et al., 2024).

These implications should be read within the limits of the present study. Higher academic resilience and lower career anxiety were associated with stronger CDSE, but self-efficacy alone does not guarantee employment, because recruitment policies, regional labour markets, and qualification requirements also determine where graduates are placed. In addition, the correlational design does not allow causal conclusions, and the sample came from a single university and was predominantly female (86.2%). TEIs cannot guarantee employment for their graduates, but they can help students evaluate career options, manage transition-related anxiety, and make informed career decisions. Finally, content validity was judged by only two experts, and several items of the ARS-30 and the Personal Ability dimension of the Career Anxiety Scale showed low item-total correlations, so future studies should re-examine the structure of the adapted instruments with confirmatory factor analysis.

CONCLUSION

Most final-year PSTE students in this study showed high academic resilience, moderate career anxiety, and high CDSE. Academic resilience and career anxiety together explained 36.4% of the variance in CDSE. Academic resilience was positively associated with CDSE, whereas career anxiety was negatively associated with it. These results indicate that

students' confidence in making career decisions depends on both their adaptive psychological resources and their career-related worries, and that the two can coexist during the transition into the teaching profession. Teacher Education Institutions should therefore combine recruitment information with psychological preparation, including guided self-reflection, emotion-regulation strategies, and mentored teaching practice that allows students to evaluate and improve their teaching competence. Future studies should follow students longitudinally from the final semester into early employment and include additional variables, such as professional identity, social support, and labour-market conditions, to explain career decision-making more fully.

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