The Impact of Merdeka Belajar - Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Curriculum on Higher Education Graduates' Employability in Indonesia: Perspectives from Lecturers

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Abstract: This study aims to investigate the viewpoints of lecturers from Indonesian universities about the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) to increase the employability of graduates in higher education. The participants were three lecturers from different types of universities in Indonesia. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed using thematic analysis in accordance with employability framework by Holmes (2013). The findings are presented in three major themes (graduate employability as possession, position, and process). The findings revealed that, firstly, the impact of the MBKM curriculum is to help develop students' employability skills, especially in terms of their attributes, such as communication and problem-solving skills, which refer to graduate employability as possession. Secondly, getting access to job opportunities and providing interclass movement were the impacts of the MBKM curriculum as graduate employability as a position. Thirdly, all university lecturers voiced that the MBKM curriculum offers opportunities for students to design and manage their portfolios according to their passions or career goals. The students had high self-awareness; they predominantly did career self-management, which is associated with graduate employability as a process. The findings serve as a resource for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers interested in interventions to improve the implementation of the MBKM curriculum, especially to achieve students' employability.

Keywords: perspectives, university lecturers, impacts, MBKM curriculum, employability

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INTRODUCTION

The unemployment issue in Indonesia is becoming an essential topic of discussion. According to Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) in 2021 estimate that Indonesia has roughly 8.96 million university students. Many believe graduates must be proficient in writing, reading, and mathematical skills to get employment (Kiel, 2016). Therefore, it is anticipated that graduates will find employment with ease. However, as of early 2020, Indonesia had 6.88 million unemployed individuals, up 60,000 from the previous year (Purwanti, 2021). Additionally, those with college and university degrees were more likely to be unemployed than those with only an elementary education or less (Indrawati & Kuncoro, 2021). Moreover, they also point out that people who completed secondary and tertiary school in Indonesia had the highest unemployment rates. It is surprising because Indrawati and Kuncoro (2021) argue that graduates from higher education levels should be able to perform the necessary job-market abilities.

To increase their employment rate, university graduates must adjust to demands of the labour market due to recent developments in the global economy. Graduates from universities who cannot adapt will find it challenging to fulfil industry demands. Industry sectors seek workers with developing abilities referred to as employability skills (Carnevale & Smith, 2013). Employability is taken into account by industries as a crucial consideration during the hiring process (Australian Institute of Geoscientists (AIG) Survey, 2009). Accordingly, university graduates who are seeking jobs believe that rather than their academic credentials, their employability skills are the most critical aspect of getting employed (Brown et al., 2003). This demonstrates the significance of revisiting graduates' employability concepts.

Employability means a set of talents, knowledge, abilities that improves chances of individual to obtain employment and doing well at work (Knight &Yorke, 2004). Additionally, employability should consider allowing people to experience fulfilment, personal growth, and their capacity to obtain employment (Clarke, 2018). In other words, employability is a far broader concept than simply individual's ability to work.

Due to the abovementioned issue of low employment rate of university graduates, universities in Indonesia are now paying more attention to increasing the employability of their graduates. This viewpoint is rooted in particular ideas, such as neoliberal view of higher education.

According to Boer et al. (2007), universities are pressured to alter their duties and

responsibilities to facilitate market-driven management. Indonesia has begun modifying its higher education system in response to this pressure (Directorate General of Higher Education, 2012; Purwanti, 2021). As Gaus and Hall (2015) stated, with the implementation of the new regulation, higher education is expected to contribute significantly in boosting economic competitiveness of the country by producing more graduates who are qualified with the various skills necessary to fill the industry demand. For these reasons, universities in Indonesia have adjusted the significance of employability skills for their graduates by changing their roles and functions.

Within such contexts, universities play an essential part in supporting students' investments in their knowledge and skills and in preparing them to be successful in the job market (Indrawati & Kuncoro, 2021; Ma'dan et al., 2020). In addition, educational institutions of higher learning in industrialised nations have actively integrated employability training into their curricula in recent years (Pham, 2021). It is hoped that through embedding employability skills into curricula higher education institutions can generate a large number of graduates with a wide range of abilities that align with the requirements of various industries (Maipita et al., 2020). As a direct result of this, the government of Indonesia has made an effort to implement this curricular modification for higher education.

Based on Regulation No. 3 /2020 concerning Higher Educational Standards, Indonesian Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, Nadiem Makariem, introduced *Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) as a new curriculum in 2020 (Purwanti, 2021). This curriculum focuses on the increased institutional autonomy of schools and universities. The MBKM curriculum aims to fill the gap between the outcomes of university and expectations in the labour market. This curriculum provides the opportunity for university students in selecting and participating in eight programs outside of their primary course: (1) *asisten mengajar* (teaching assistant); (2) *pertukaran pelajar* (exchanges programs); (3) *praktek kerja atau magang* (work practises or internships in other workplaces or industries); (4) *riset atau penelitian* (conducting research); (5) *kegiatan wirausaha* (entrepreneurial activities); (6) *proyek kemanusiaan* (community services projects); (7) *kuliah kerja nyata tematik atau membangun desa* (humanitarian programs); and (8) *proyek independen atau studi* (independent projects) (Permendikbud No. 3 about Higher Educational Standards, 2020). By implementing these eight programs, it is expected that university will produce a higher number

of graduates with various skills who will be able to compete in the labour market (Maipita et

al., 2020). However, it is important to note that to implement these changes successfully, the collaboration between all parties (institutions, stakeholders, and industries) is necessary to implement the MBKM curriculum.

Regarding curriculum implementation, the lecturers' perspectives play an important role in the everyday practices of higher education institutions. Lecturers are challenged to apply transformative learning methods in their classes after being exposed to a fundamental approach during curriculum renewal (Sathorar & BLignaut, 2021). In addition, as defined by Jansen (2009):

> Changing the curriculum without changing the curriculum maker is especially difficult under radical social transformation. Changing the curriculum without being too far ahead of the teachers who implement it is unlikely to re-arrange the epistemological order of things in the classroom (p.179).

This indicates the importance of ensuring those people responsible for executing the curriculum have the appropriate orientations and attitudes towards the strategy. As Cotronei-Baird (2019) states that developing employable skills is also a challenge for national and international institutions. Therefore, it is essential to investigate and comprehend the perspectives of academic leaders in institutions, especially lecturers, in implementing *Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) on graduates' employability abilities.

This research allows lecturers as a participant to express their views on the Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) implementation, focusing on its influence on the employability of university graduates and the measures that can be done to support students effectively under this curriculum. It means that this research project provides an opportunity to contribute to the scholarship on a topic of importance to them and their profession. Additionally, it is also significant to higher education institutions and stakeholders because they are still in the process of exploring figuring out how to construct and develop effective curriculum in higher education which support students on work-ready mode after graduating from universities. As this study promotes discussion about an area of importance that is not currently represented in scholarly debate in Indonesia. The lecturers' current understanding, views, and beliefs regarding the effects of the MBKM on the employability of university graduates will inform and influence the knowledge and practices of the stakeholders.

Prior research has demonstrated the significance of including employability skills into higher education curriculum. Thus, the Indonesian government implemented the MBKM curriculum to enhance graduates' competencies. However, there is currently a lack of information regarding how lecturers could improve the implementation of this curriculum. In addition, the majority of extant research focuses primarily on the perspectives of stakeholders such as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and policymakers such as the Minister of Education. There remain few research studies on the perspectives of teachers. At the higher education level, lecturers play a crucial role in translating the curriculum into the learning process. It is essential to explore university lecturers' perspectives on the implementation of the MBKM curriculum. Consequently, the study issue for this modest research project is:

"How do lecturers perceive the impacts of the *Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) curriculum on university graduate employability in Indonesia?"

The aim of this study is to investigate the viewpoints of lecturers from Indonesia universities about the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) to increase the employability of graduates at higher education levels. Thus, this project illustrated how to implement the present curriculum to better prepare university graduates entering labour marker.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review reveals three themes which are (1) merdeka belajar – kampus merdeka curriculum (MBKM) implementation in higher education; (2) factors influencing graduates' employability; and (3) the importance of researching lecturers' perspectives.

1. The MBKM implementation in higher education

According to Regulation No. 3 of the Year 2020, regarding the National Standards of Higher Education, introduced by the Minister of Education and Culture of Indonesia, the MBKM curriculum is currently adopted in Indonesian higher education institutions (Purwanti, 2021). The key principle of the MBKM policy is "autonomy, independence, accelerated bureaucracy, and innovation in higher education" (Nizam, 2020, as cited in Purwanti, 2021, p.385). Through this new curriculum, colleges and universities are providing students with the opportunity to complete their semesters by selecting and participating in eight programs. Some studies have

examined the effectiveness of the MBKM curriculum and its institutional use (Krishnapatria,

2021; Wahyuni et al., 2022). However, limited research has been conducted on how this curriculum prepare higher education students for entering their post-graduation lives especially in terms of their employability skills.

According to the literature, the successful application of the MBKM curriculum in higher education institutions has been ongoing for about two years. Students' interest (Pristiana et al., 2022), teamwork among all involved parties (Puspaningtyas et al., 2022), and active participation from lecturers, industries, and students are cited as contributing factors in its success. However, the literature also reports certain challenges, such as a lack of information regarding curriculum implementation (Krishnapatria, 2021). There is no detailed information in terms of implementation of eight programs (Krishnapatria, 2021; Pristiana et al., 2022). According to a study conducted in Indonesian universities, the majority of university staff were familiar with the concept of the MBKM curriculum but did not fully understand how this curriculum could be implemented (Pristiana et al., 2022), especially on how eights MBKM programs are applied to develop graduates' employability effectively.

Researchers have examined the link between the curriculum and students' employability in other settings, including the UK and Malaysia (Ma'dan et al., 2020). Some institutions have integrated graduate employability into their curricula by offering various study programs like work-related learning, internship programs, and ready-for-work activities (Mason et al., 2009). Through these programs, students get the opportunity to put what they have learned in the classroom into practice in the real world. According to Shivoro et al. (2017), by providing students with a professional context where they may learn and put their general skills into practice, work-integrated learning allows students to build their discipline-specific talents. Additionally, including employable skills in the curriculum might compel students to engage in real-world concerns, such as community projects (Shivori et al., 2017). This method enables students to think critically about the knowledge and experiences they have gained and how they will apply them in the future. This means that contextualisation of the abilities should include employability.

2. Factors influencing graduates' employability

Graduates employability includes both the outcomes for individual graduates and the transition of students from higher education to the workplace. As Pham (2021) demonstrates various factors affect graduates' employability. Firstly, investing in human capital increases graduates'

employability (Pham, 2021). Human capital refers personal attributes, such as job experience, cognitive ability, training, and education (McArdle et al., 2007). In order to build the human

capital of graduates, it is the responsibility of higher education institutions to implement necessary programs and modify learning process to ensure that the skills of graduates are in line with industry demands.

A mismatch between graduate outputs, such as job readiness, and industry needs, however, has been found in some studies (Ma'dan et al., 2020; Maipita et al., 2020; Purwanti, 2021). Even though certain higher institutions are aware of the industry input values in establishing programs that are in line with current needs, the success of this collaboration is still debatable given the continually high unemployment rate among university graduates (Ma'dan et al., 2020). This mismatch has an impact on human capital surpluses and deficits which could lower labour productivity in the labour market. This is because graduates' knowledge of the abilities required by industry differs from what they studied in the university (Indrawati & Kuncoro, 2021; Maipita et al., 2020). Therefore, higher education institutions must make consistent efforts to ensure that graduates grow their competencies and abilities in accordance with the demands of the market.

However, relying on human capital is not sufficient to ensure graduates obtain employment because it is frequently evaluated in conjunction with other types of capital, such as cultural understanding, certification from professional body (Pham et al., 2019). For instance, if graduates have difficulty in terms of manifesting their human capital through the creation of resumes, presenting their credentials, performing interviews, and proving technical proficiency, it will limit their chances of finding a job in the labour market (Pham, 2021). As a result, graduates must acquire not only human capital but also additional skills in order to advance their career trajectories on the job market.

Another factor influencing graduates' employability is other attributes, such as career management abilities, which are very important in increasing graduates' employability in the academic environment. Active behaviours such as networking, asking guidance, and studying job options are considered to constitute career management abilities (Okay-Somerville & Scholarios, 2015; Purwanti, 2021). The success of an individual's employability is also influenced by their capacity to plan their future goals, which is linked to career management skills (Jackson & Wilton, 2016). With these goals, individuals can start to improve their career management skills as early as feasible, even before determining whether to attend university, while also developing the information and skills necessary for the labour market. Therefore, career management encourages contemplation on professional decisions and helps people

comprehend their options (Jackson &Wilton, 2016).

However, it is "a new trend" that students are more inclined to enrol in college merely to escape unemployment rather than genuinely interested in their program (Purwanti, 2021). Additionally, research indicates that students tend to have ill-defined conceptions of their lives after completing their studies and do not autonomously engage in or think about their future careers (Perrone & Vickers, 2003). This means that during their university years, these students do not fully know or plan what talents they want to build that would assist their career trajectories. This will have an effect on how well students learn and build employability skills during their studies. Therefore, it is important that higher education institutions begin actively and fully integrating the employability focus, which includes career management.

Thirdly, graduates' employability suffers from a lack of opportunities to put their academic knowledge to use. Graduates should be given the opportunity to use their knowledge and abilities in practical situations (Sunismi et al., 2022). Purwanti (2021) states that graduates lack practical skills and just have a theoretical knowledge of their subjects. Additionally, the vast majority of businesses across industries (87%) used work experience, placements, and internships as an important factor when employing graduates (Kinish et al., 2016). This means that students who do not get the chance to practise will have trouble finding employment. Therefore, it is crucial for stakeholders and institutions to give students a space, such as internships, where they may apply what they have learned outside of the classroom.

3. The importance of researching lecturer's perspective

The efficiency of the MBKM curriculum implementation is significantly influenced by the roles of lecturers. To fulfil the purpose of the curriculum, lecturers needs to participate actively in encouraging their students to select and engage in the MBKM programmes (Pristiana et al., 2022; Sunismi et al., 2022). Since lecturers' abilities affect students' knowledge, lecturers should be proficient in both practical and theoretical skills to assist their students effectively in teaching and learning activities (Ma'dan et al., 2020). Therefore, it is crucial for professors to learn from their participation and reap the benefits in order to understand this contemporary curriculum better.

Additionally, before learning more about the new information, it is necessary to understand the lecturers' point of view. Individuals' perception has a more significant impact on involvement in the MBKM programs than other aspects, according to Wahyuni et al. (2022) and Sunismi et

al. (2022). Additionally, a crucial aspect of community involvement is taking into

account value, convenience, and trust in perception (Cristanti & Sukoco, 2022). Additionally, the perceptions promote students' employability skills in the MBKM programs by encouraging innovative approaches to use a variety of technologies and media into the work completed (Insani et al., 2021; Pristiana et al., 2022). In other words, how much emphasis is placed on the learning process in this curriculum reform depends much on the lecturers' perspectives on the MBKM programme.

The UK, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and other countries have all performed studies on lecturers' perspectives on increasing graduates' employability (Wickramasinghe & Perera, 2010; Morrison, 2014). For instance, a study conducted in the Malaysian setting demonstrated that university leaders and lecturers were becoming more aware of exploring perceptions on strengthening employability skills, therefore enhancing the graduates' chances of finding employment (Ma'dan et al., 2020). However, there have not been many research on lecturers' perspectives on increasing graduates' employability in Indonesia. This point encourages the author to investigate why the viewpoint of lecturers is not treated as a primary focus of the research. Meanwhile, lecturers play an important role in translating this curriculum into the teaching and learning process and encouraging students to engage in eight programs of MBKM (Pristiana et al., 2022; Sunismi et al., 2022). In order to better understand how the curriculum contributes to graduates' employability, this study examined the lecturers' point of view.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework developed by Holmes (2013), which is depicted in **Figure 1**, was used in this study to examine the implementation of the MBKM curriculum in higher education settings. This framework was chosen because it provides a clear illustration of some essential methods for enhancing employability. Furthermore, because it is intended to be located in higher education contexts, the characteristics in this framework relevant to in higher education institutions. Holmes (2013) mentions that three different approaches to employability are based on position, possession, and process perspectives.
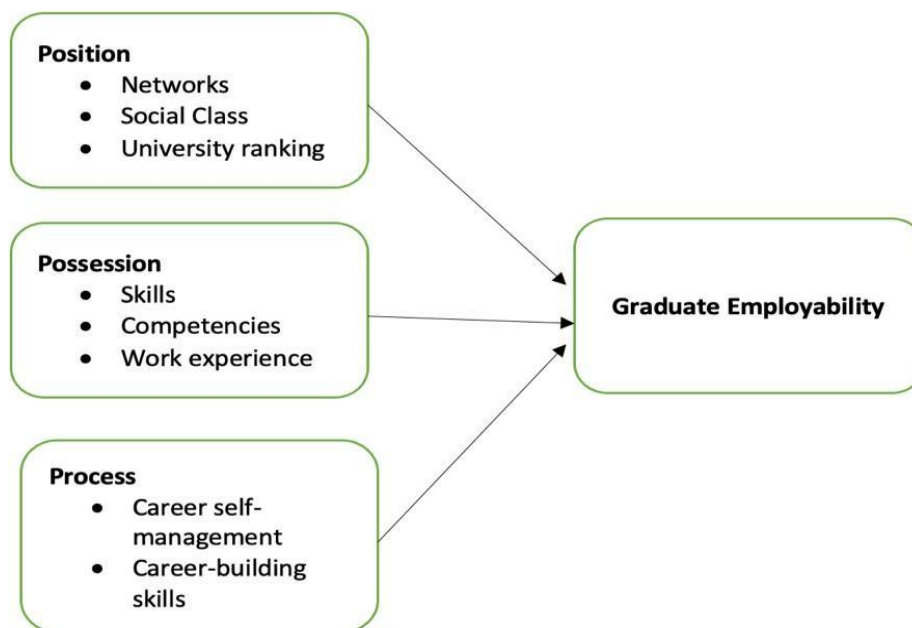

Figure 1. Graduate Employability – a higher education

Firstly, the possession approach is commonly defined as human capital (Holmes, 2013). A graduates employability in the labour market is determined by technical and non-technical skills and personal characteristics, such as skill, ethnicity, gender, and nationality (Holmes, 2013). This viewpoint emphasises the importance of having a diverse set of skills, knowledge, and capacities. Yorke (2004) argued for this approach by illustrating employability as follows:

> A set of achievements – skills, understanding, and personal attributes – that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community, and the economy. (p. 8)

Secondly, according to the position approach, university graduates' social positions, such as their family backgrounds, provide them with access to social capital, which is essential for

securing work and advancing their careers (Holmes, 2013). Social capital refers to networks

and social contacts obtained from family, peers, social organisations, and higher education that enhance a graduate's employment prospects (Pham et al., 2019). According to Holmes (2013), social status has an immediate and direct impact on career opportunities. In the case of university students, this approach is effectively reflected in the way university students are positioned in the MBKM implementation. The type of career that graduates from advantaged backgrounds are likely to pursue demonstrates direct impacts. In contrast, the type of higher education institution attended, the level of success, and the degree specialisation have indirect effects on the learning experience (Clarke, 2018). Similarly, a study conducted in the United Kingdom by Brown and Scase (2005) reveals that fast-track graduate posts are still primarily awarded to persons from privileged backgrounds. However, socio-economic standing has little effect on the employability of graduates (Okay-Somerville & Scholarios, 2015). They believe that graduates from less prestigious higher education institutions may have a lower perceived employability because they attended less prestigious colleges and not because of their socio-economic position.

Thirdly, the process approach derives from the perspective that attending college or university is one step of an individual's life-course process. Education also influences the distribution of advantages and disadvantages among university graduates entering the workforce. Individuals begin to develop a graduate identity to present to employers and recruiters, based on the traits and skills they need to acquire their degree (Holmes, 2013). Therefore, graduates should differentiate themselves from non-graduates and other graduates on the labour market by demonstrating their qualities, which enable them to supply an employer with the desired inputs and outputs (Clarke, 2018). Career self-management and related behaviours, such as career search, are crucial components of this process (Okay-Somerville & Scholarios, 2015).

To sum up, the literature has demonstrated how three employability approaches from Holmes (2013) were used to explain how university graduates manage their employability trajectories through MBKM programs. However, it is uncertain how this curriculum enables or constrains university graduates' employability based on lecturers' perspectives. The purpose of this project was to fill in this gap which referred to an overarching research question "How do lecturers perceive the impacts of the *Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) curriculum on university graduate employability in Indonesia?".

METHODOLOGY

This project employs a qualitative methodology because it enables researchers to get rich, in-depth data by investigating the research's focus (Ling, 2017). The qualitative research strategy does involve analytical strategies that should be applied systematically when analysing the data, even though it cannot be evaluated using the same criteria as the quantitative research approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As a result, it is essential to guarantee trustworthiness in qualitative research.

Presenting a case which happened in Indonesian Higher Education context in which the new curriculum called *Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) has been adopted. The existence of this case becomes the starting point to conduct this small-scale research. Because the purpose of this study is to investigate a specific case, namely, university lecturer perceptions on the impacts of the MBKM curriculum on graduates' employability in Indonesia, the suitable research methodology for this study was a qualitative case study. A case study is a type of methodology which involves detailed and "multi-faceted understanding" of an issue in real-life context (Crowe et al., 2011, p.100). Furthermore, based on Creswell (2012) states, a case study is an in-depth examination of a specific project, policy, programme, or system in real life from many perspectives which is relevant to the research question on this study. This study required a comprehensive a elaboration of a certain social phenomenon toward the implementation of the MBKM curriculum to prepare the students after post-graduation life based on university lecture perspective.

Research method

This section details the data collection method employed in this research.

Data

collection

Participant

For this small-scale project, recruiting a sufficiently varied population is important. Purposeful sampling was used to recruit participants (Elo et al., 2014). Purposive sampling, as described by Elo et al. (2014), is suited for a qualitative study in which researchers investigate the participants with the best understanding of the research issue. There were three participants (Purnama, Waluyo, and Nina) in this study. The research participants needed to meet some

following criteria (1) they were lecturers from *universitas swasta*, *universitas keagamaan,*

universitas negeri or another type of universities in Indonesia, and (2) they had prior experience implementing the MBKM curriculum.

Furthermore, there was no restriction about how many years lecturers need to be teaching in the university to be a participant in this research. This research was open in involving lecturers from different stages of their career. Moretti et al. (2011) note that defining the guiding concepts and selection criteria used to choose research participants and their significant characteristics is crucial for evaluating the transferability of the findings to different contexts. Posting an advertising flyer on social media (WhatsApp, Facebook, Linked In), personal contact by emailing them the invitation, and utilising the researcher's network were some ways recruiting the potential participants.

Semi structure interview

The instrument for research was a semi-structured interview. This interview was done to determine how lecturers evaluate the impact of MBKM curriculum implementation on the graduates' employability. To acquire specific and thorough information, a semi-structured interview allows interviewees to freely express their thoughts within a prescribed range (Li et al., 2019). This type of interview allows interviewers to investigate issues raised by the interviewees based on their responses to a few pre-determined questions in this study (McGrath et al., 2019; Polit & Beck, 2010). The interview questions can be changed flexibly (Li et al., 2019). However, there have been concerns regarding the quality of responses from the participants. Therefore, the researcher needs to prepare an interview guide (Kallio et al., 2016). The interview guide contains the questions and primary topic of the study.

This research employed Zoom as online platform to conduct the interview. As Oliffe et al. (2021) demonstrate that an online interview is suitable for this project for a variety of reasons, including lower costs and greater ease. Participants in this study could not meet in person because they come from different parts of Indonesia. However, when doing an online interview, I found some difficulties, such as to establish rapport with participants. In order to mitigate the difficulty of establishing rapport, I spent the first few minutes talking issues irrelevant to the research in order to familiarise myself with the participants (Shenton, 2004). In addition, with regard to the internet connection, I acknowledge that this limitation restricted the participations from small towns and rural areas of Indonesia. Mostly the interview was completed the interview within 45 minutes. Bahasa Indonesia was used as a spoken language of the interview.

The interview was recorded, transcribed, and translated for analysis purposes.

Both word-by-word and meaning based translation were used in this study to translate the interview transcript.

Data analysis

The data from the interviews was analysed by using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The first strategy is to become familiar with the data. Therefore, after being obtained through interviews, the verbal data is converted into written form. Transcription is "a key phase of data analysis within qualitative interpretative methodology" (Bird, 2005, p.227). Furthermore, by reading the data repeatedly, the researcher can become familiar with its depth and breadth (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The second strategy is to generate initial codes; frequently appearing codes are then organised into themes. Based on Kelle (2004) and Seale (2000), coding can be done manually or with a software application. This study generated coding manually. A combination of both framework from Holmes (2013) and data-driven approach was incorporated into this study. According to Holliday (2015), software cannot replace the intuition of researchers who were present when data are collected. Moreover, it is likely that the data did not describe the entire meaning. Besides, some data were complex, that defining coding was complicated, so the narrative needs to be stated creatively.

The third strategy is to search the themes; an argument regarding what can be inferred from the data is constructed using the themes as headings and subheadings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Fourthly, while collecting evidence to support the argument, it was necessary to review themes, revisit the data, and reevaluate and modify the relevant themes. As Holiday (2015) states drafting and redrafting arguments will improve the process of refinement. Next, as Braun and Clarke (2006) demonstrate that the fourth strategy is to define and name themes; the core of each theme must be determined, and the aspects of data represented by each theme must be identified. Same as in generating initial codes phases, in defining and naming themes, a hybrid approach between considering prior codes from Holmes (2013) and a data-driven method will be used. It is important that the readers understand the idea exactly from the names, which should be solid and concise.

Lastly, in producing reports, researchers need to do more than just provide the data in this

phase. Extracts must be included in an analytical narrative that persuasively highlights the problem with the data and goes beyond a simple summary of the data to present an argument

related to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Those five processes were employed to analyse the raw data from the interview of this research.

Figure 2 depicts a summary of research approach that guides the study design. These research approaches were employed to create the core dimension for capturing lecturers' perceptions on MBKM curriculum impacts on the graduates employability.
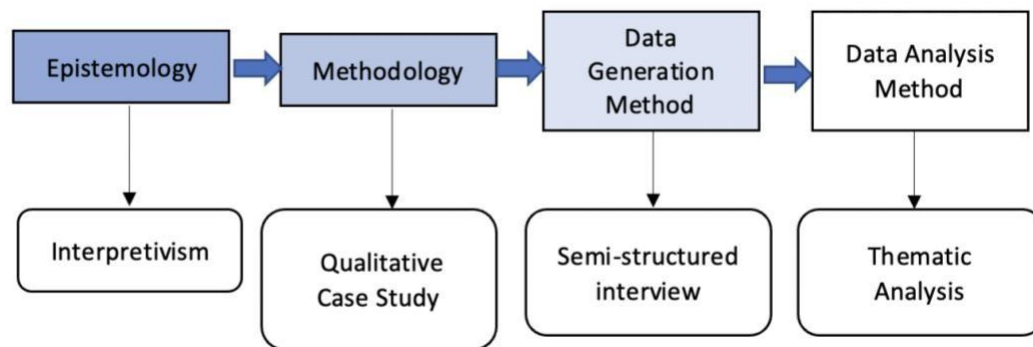

Figure 2. Research methodology of the study

Trustworthiness

Qualitative research requires fulfilling quality standards for credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Credibility refers to internal validity focusing on valuing truth (Shenton, 2004). Member checking was used to ensure the credibility of this project (Elo et al., 2014). In order to ensure validity, the participant collaborated in analysing and revising the interview transcripts (Duncan & Watson, 2010). This strategy allows the participants to contribute additional insight into the study and check the reliability of the researcher's interpretation and input (Ercikan & Roth, 2009).

Furthermore, transferability means that the research findings apply to a broader population (Shenton, 2004). The researcher must provide a detailed explanation of the research setting, topic, interview guide, interview procedure, sample, etc., to ensure the study can be recreated (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Thirdly, "confirmability as an analogy to objectivity" (Lincoln & Guba, 2007), and dependability is concerned with consistent results (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). An audit trail was used to assure the dependability and confirmability of the research findings.

Finally, reflexivity is employed in qualitative research to "legitimize and validate question

research practice and representations" (Pillow, 2003, p.175). Reflexivity is heavily connected

to researchers' positioning. Thus, it is essential to acknowledge the awareness of my position in this study. As Dodgson (2019) mentions, it is important to provide readers with details of the social and environmental context in which the research was conducted. The researcher background is part of this, since it will likely have influenced the process and permeated the entire research endeavour. In this research, I position myself as both an insider and an outsider (Dwyer & Buckle, 2018). As an insider, I am from Indonesia and had experiences of learning at an Indonesian university. I may have some insider culture and knowledge about how university has or has not developed employability in Indonesian contexts. For example, this insider position helped me as a researcher building the rapport with the participants when collecting the data.

Furthermore, at the same time I am an outsider in this research. I had no experiences working at one of these Indonesian universities that I was researching. I also come to the research site as a researcher from an Australian university. When I reflected on my experience during my master's degree at Monash University, one of the top higher education institution in the world for producing career-ready graduates, which provides many activities, programs, and lessons to support their students' employability.

This position influenced how we, as a researcher, saw the importance of enhancing employability skills at the higher education level. Then, this might cause the bias in terms of how the researcher generate the data in this qualitative research. To mitigate the bias, a research journal was kept to describe the interview aspects and settings that were observed during the interview as a way to develop researcher reflexivity. This approach allows the researcher to evaluate the study based on the researcher's notes on all decisions made during the research process and their own reflective ideas, knowledge, emotions, and conclusions (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Ortlipp, 2008). In conclusion, all those strategies were employed to support the trustworthiness of this study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following section attempts to explain the lecturers' perspective on the impact of the MBKM curriculum on graduate employability from the lens of Holmes' framework (2013). The findings are presented in three major themes that I deductively derived from Holmes' framework (2013). The themes are (1) graduate employability as possession, (2) graduate

employability as position, and (3) graduate employability as process. The first theme focuses on the importance of students' personal attributes in enhancing their employability skills in

MBKM programs. The second theme concerns how social background impacts students' participation in MBKM programs The third theme explores how higher education institutions, lecturers, and industries support students' employability through the curriculum and how students act towards the MBKM program offered.

1. Graduate employability as possession

Graduate employability as a possession was the first theme that was highlighted from the data. This approach focuses on the importance of students' personal attributes to obtain employability (Holmes, 2013). In this study, this concept allows me to explore how the implementation of the MBKM curriculum has helped students to develop personal attributes. Key findings from this study were that the participants perceived graduates' employability as possession which students could obtain through their personal attributes, such as "communication" and "problem-solving". However, there were some challenges which constrain how this curriculum can work effectively, such as "interest" and "commitment".

All three lecturers from Indonesian universities in this study agreed that personal attributes, such as communication and problem-solving skills, are developed through MBKM programs. For example, when discussed about the quality of the students as the result of the MBKM curriculum, in Nina noted,

> I see the differences that happen for my students before involved in internship and community service programs whose eyes are usually left to right in class. Then, now they can sit more upright and have the confidence to present their opinions and experiences in forums such as student affairs, seminars. (Nina)

Based on the conversation, it appears that students receive benefits influencing their personal attributes, such as developing their "confidence to present" their works, from their experience of engaging in the MBKM programs. The participant noted the impact of MBKM programs by mentioning "the difference" attitude of her students. "Whose eyes are usually left to right", indicates her student usually do not put themselves into the learning process, however, after participating in the MBKM programs her students "sit more upright". The participant noted the impact of the MBKM curriculums on the developing students' confidence to present themselves, which is associated with a positive employment outcome.

Furthermore, had a similar perspective, noting that communication skills were positively impacted by the MBKM programs. Purnama also highlighted that another personal attribute,

particularly problem solving skill, which improved as a result joining the MBKM programs.

> I can see there is an improvement of my students' act of defining a problem after participating in the social entrepreneurship program. For example, due to limited opportunities in the labour market, my students choose to become an entrepreneur instead of working in company. (Purnama)

The impact of the MBKM curriculum in the research question based on this conversation are referred to "an improvement" "act" of her student on "defining a problem". She tried to explain by giving an example that "become an entrepreneur" as a solution in dealing with the problem in "limited opportunities" that her students face in the labour market. She is of the opinion that the MBKM program enhances the way that students act towards the problem. It is likely that the participants perceived the MBKM programs as a vehicle for personal skill development, which they thought important in building students' employability.

However, the participants also pointed out that there were some challenges in developing the students' attributes using MBKM curriculum, such as interest and commitment. When asked about how students responded to the MBKM programs, Waluyo noted that his students struggled to select the program.

> When filling out *kartu rencana studi* (study plan card), some students do not really know what program or subject interest that they will take. MBKM programs confuse them. It is because they do not really know what they are interested in or what they are passionate about. (Waluyo)

Furthermore, Waluyo and Purnama found from their experiences that their students often selected the MBKM programs under peer pressure. For example, Waluyo said, "[…] because of just following their circle' choice without knowing and considering their own interest, some students did not to participate the program responsibly or even quit from the program before finish it". In his opinion, students lack of a real interest towards the MBKM programs resulted "lack of commitment". This was supported by Purnama who further exemplified,

> In my findings, in the implementation of *Kampus Mengajar* (teaching campuses), frequently the students who are deployed are not responsible because they are not really interested in that program. When students are selected and have to carry out the program for 4 months by accompanying the teacher to teach, many students do not attend at school. We can say that it is because of the lack of commitment from students in the process of implementing the MBKM program. (Purnama)

When students have no interest toward the choice of their life trajectories, they will "not

responsible" or commit to their decision and complete their program wholeheartedly. It can be inferred that both commitment and personal interest of students are important aspects in

implementing the MBKM curriculum which can support the programs in developing student employability.

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the perspectives of university lecturers in Indonesia regarding the impacts of MBKM curriculum on employability of university graduates. The findings of this study indicated that all of the three participants, Nina, Purnama, and Waluyo, were in agreement to MBKM curriculum helps to develop students' employability skills, especially in term of their personal attributes such as "communication" and "problem-solving" skills. This finding is consistent with that of Wilson's study (2019) on 378 engineering students which shows the internship programs improved the communication skills of the participants using variety forms of methods such as informal email, presentation, meeting discussion. Overall this finding is in accordance with findings reported by Galloway et al. (2014) who conducted study in the UK universities. They found that the improvement of IT' students' communication skills is a substantial impact from placement programs. In today's business environment, communication is the most important interpersonal skill (Robles, 2012). Furthermore, one of the most essential generic skills that students should master before graduated from the university is clear oral communication (Murrillo-Zamorano & Montanero, 2017). Later study conducted by Oliver et al., (2011), the development of innovative ideas and students' potential for future employment depend on their ability to communicate. As indicated previously, communication skills which students develops as an impact of the MBKM curriculum can support them to gain employability.

Moreover, "problem-solving" skill is another impact of the MBKM programs on graduate employability. Similarly, several research studies reported that problem-solving as one of learning outcomes from the MBKM curriculum (Krishnapatria, 2021; Pristiana et al., 2022). It is because in the industries where students doing internships, students are supported by regular meetings, advices, and trainings with the professional, which contributes to the enhancement of students' problem-solving skill (Jackson, 2015). Internships require students to combine theory and practise by offering opportunities for exercise of gained information and abilities, as well as problem-solving (Weisz & Smith, 2005). More importantly, students who are competent at problem-solving display the trait of resilience, demonstrating their capacity to overcome obstacles as it helps to create a differentiation which makes graduate stand out from other graduates (Ng et al., 2021). In other words, Indonesian university students who gain and

develop their problem-skill as an impact of the MBKM curriculum can improve their opportunities to be employed in the labour market.

All in all, according to the participants, communication and problem-solving skills were two personal attributes of the students that enhanced through the MBKM programs. This discussion led to Holmes' (2013) study which concluded that communication and problem-solving skills as major general skills were most frequently stated by employers. Those are a set of skills that increase graduates' chances of obtaining employment. It is implied that once students possess the necessary attributes, they will become more employable in the labour market.

However, there were two negative comments from the participants about students' attributes in participating in the MBKM programs. Firstly, the participants mentioned there was a problem related to students' interest issue. Waluyo, the participant of this study, identified his students have not found their interest, thus, it effects how they select subject interest in their academic trajectories. This idea also reflects Harackiewicz et al. (2016) who argue that students who have not already discovered their interest during their learning process are not better prepared for their academic and career. This idea is supported by Quinlan and Renninger (2022) who conducted study on relation between interest development of students and their career choice in the UK universities. They found that the majority of students, who well-developed their interest, will be motivated in participating their choice of the programs. In addition, it is likely that students' interest level in subject is a major predictor of career choice. Similar to Harackiewicz's et al. (2016) and Quinlan and Renninger's (2022) studies, my study found that students who have not found and developed their interest will find difficulty towards subject selection, which in turn to their career choice.

Secondly, another negative comment from the participants was about commitment issue of the students in engaging in the MBKM programs. As reported by Purnama, students appeared to neglect their the MBKM program due to "lack of commitment" and therefore did not participate in program associated with their employability development. In this case, the students do not put their interest and are not responsible into the choice of the programs as has been reflected in Waluyo's and Purnama's comments. Students will not commit to their chosen program if they have no desire in doing it. Whereas, Van der Heidjen et al., (2022) argue that individual with strong commitment will be motivated to participate in beneficial programs that will strengthen their employability skills so making them more valuable and attractive to

employers.

To sum up, based on the lens of Holmes' (2013) framework, communication and problem-solving skills are two major general skills that are required to more likely obtain employment. Additionally, participation in the MBKM programs has developed personal attributes of students, such as communication and problem-solving skills which contribute to their employability before entering the workplace. However, commitment and interest are the challenges that the lecturers in this study presented in the MBKM implementation. Recommendation to address this issue will be presented in the implementation section.

2. Graduate employability as position

The second theme that the participants emphasized was graduate employability as a position. This approach highlights how socioeconomic class, background, and network influence students to access a range of capital to support their employment outcomes (Holmes, 2013). In this study, this concept allows me to examine the implementation of the MBKM curriculum has helped students to develop their network or upwards mobility in supporting graduate employability effectively. Thus, this helps them get access to job opportunities and provides interclass movement. However, students' socioeconomic status, such as distance, constrains their participation in MBKM programs.

The finding revealed that in this study, Nina, Purnama, and Waluyo argued that the MBKM programs provide an opportunity for students to work closely with partners or industries, which advantages students to gain access to job opportunities, such as job offers. For example,

> From what I know, students are selected are those who have good grades during the internship. Well, usually, they (students) are immediately offered a job. The industry said, "Yes if you have graduated, I will wait for you to work here". They may not even need to go through the test process from the industry or even have a test, but it is just a formality. Things like this are challenging to get if they do not join this program and do not build good networking. (Nina)

From this conversation, the MBKM curriculum's impact through "internship" program is that her students are "offered a job" even before graduating from the university. She tried to emphasize that the MBKM curriculum, through its programs, helps her students to get access to job opportunities that may not be possible without the programs by saying "difficult to get". Accordingly, Nina added, "especially in Indonesian context, who you know is more important than what you can do or what you know." It seems that networking is more valuable than the

skills and knowledge to be employed.

Moreover, another participant, Purnama, highlighted interclass movement as the impact of participating in the MBKM programs. She said, "all students from different levels of socioeconomic status, including students from lower family backgrounds, can join the MBKM programs". It indicates that students from lower socioeconomic family backgrounds have the same opportunities as those from upper socioeconomic backgrounds to engage in the MBKM programs. In addition, she also further said,

> Eko and Risma, my students from lower and middle socioeconomic backgrounds, participate in the exchange program International Student Mobility Awards (ISMA). They told me, "I am so grateful, mam, because this program provides me an opportunity to gain more experiences and build a valuable network". They (students) stated that it is difficult for them to get these opportunities without funding from the government because of their socioeconomic status. (Purnama)

The impacts of the MBKM curriculum based on Purnama's comment refers to "opportunity", "gain more experience", and "build the network". It implies that every student, including those from lower socioeconomic status, has the same "opportunity" to "participate in an exchange program" because of the MBKM curriculum. Purnama further explained that "it is likely that students from the lower-middle socioeconomic background will stay on the same level if they do not have valuable experience or opportunity". Then, it seems that students from a lower family background may have a better chance of moving up in terms of social-economic status. The socioeconomic improvement that students may have due to their better experience because they get "more experiences" and have "a network" from upper social-economic status allows them to move mobility upwards.

On the other hand, Nina had a different perspective from Purnama. She argued that socioeconomic factors had challenged student success in their employability post-graduation and participation in the MBKM curriculum. For example, the distance from students' homes to the company or the internship place would discourage them from participating.

> Students who participate in the MBKM program are students who have a background of middle-upper socioeconomic status. In contrast, lower socioeconomic students tend to think or even decide not to participate in the MBKM program. For example, the distance from home to campus, originally 15 kilometers, will increase if they want to do internships in industry or other places. Thus, indirectly the money students spend on transportation will increase by joining the MBKM programs. […] Of course, this will have an impact on the graduates' employability outcome. (Nina)

Although this notion does not refer to the impacts of the MBKM curriculum, this concerns "the MBKM programs," which are supposed to facilitate students in developing their employability skills in its implementation, could not work effectively due to "socioeconomic status". It can be inferred from the conversation that students' participation in the MBKM programs is dominated by "middle-upper socioeconomic status". Meanwhile, disadvantaged students tend to avoid engaging in the MBKM programs since "the distance" factor will require students to spend more "money" if participating in the MBKM programs. This factor tends to result in lower engagement of the university students in the MBKM curriculum, which impact low-employability students.

Discussion of the findings

All university lecturers in this study argued that the MBKM programs, such as internships, teaching campuses, and entrepreneurship programs, help students develop their network to support graduate employability. This finding is in line with the previous finding, showing that placement or internship programs facilitate excellent networking opportunities (Martin et al., 2011), which is essential for career advancement (Martin & Hughes, 2009). The participants mentioned different examples of the impacts of the MBKM curriculum that students get through networking, such as getting access to job opportunities and providing interclass movement.

Nina highlighted the importance of building a good connection between the students and the industry practitioners, which left good impressions after the internship. Thus, it makes the industry practitioner want to recruit students into their companies. As Watanabe (2004) demonstrates, networking can help students transition smoothly from higher education learning to a work environment by allowing them to interact with employers directly. Networking is a strategy that forms the community of practice, comprised of industry practitioners, alumni, and students for interaction and continual learning through shared knowledge (Jing et al., 2011).

On the one hand, the participant in this study, Purnama, stated as the impact of the MBKM programs was the interclass movement. Interclass movement means students from disadvantaged families may have better opportunities to move up in terms of socioeconomic status due to more experiences and the network they get from the MBKM programs. Students

from lower-middle socioeconomic backgrounds are likely to remain at the same level if they do not gain valuable experience or opportunities.

On the other hand, the finding, reflected in Nina's comment, that the socioeconomic status of the students discouraged them from participating in MBKM programs, which impedes their employability. This finding is consistent with McCafferty's (2022) research showing that students from disadvantaged backgrounds are frequently unable to "leverage social and economic capital to secure sought-after work experience and extra-curricular opportunities," which inhibits them from their future progression (p.583). More importantly, students from the lower socioeconomic background are the least likely to have work experience (Manson, 2021). Embedded employability through the MBKM curriculum is expected to relieve all students from the difficulty of obtaining employment in the labour market. In fact, disadvantaged students are found struggling to access the programs.

Overall, engaging in the MBKM curriculum has contributed to students' network, which provides them access to job opportunities and interclass movement. However, the level of socioeconomic status is challenged students to engage in the MBKM programs. In other words, this discussion leads to Holmes' (2013) framework, the differences in employment outcomes revealed "to support an analysis that the notion of graduate skills" is closely related to the issue of social positioning (p.548). When university students build an effective network with the industries, it will give them an advantage that supports them in obtaining employment.

3. Graduate employability as a process

The third theme the participants frequently mentioned was graduate employability as a process. According to Holmes (2013), individuals can and do make decisions about their future jobs, but these decisions are made "through time and in contact with others; it is processual" (p. 548). In this study, this concept allows me to investigate the implementation of the MBKM curriculum that has helped students to develop their behaviour. All participants argued that higher education institutions had facilitated the students to prepare for their post-study employability journey with a range of options available in the MBKM curriculum. As Purnama, the participant is a female lecturer from a private university in Indonesia, stated:

> The MBKM programs, implemented in higher education, accommodate students passionate about other fields. For example, many English Education students are passionate about video making. So apart from taking core courses in the English study program, they can also take a maximum of 40 credits of courses outside the English study program. That is the meaning of the Merdeka Belajar - Kampus Merdeka; students can handle a wide range of competencies

that are considered to equip them with employability skills when they graduate later.

Based on this conversation, the MBKM curriculum's impacts are "accommodates" and "passionate about other fields". Purnama demonstrated that the MBKM curriculum gives students a chance to improve their skills in various fields, especially those that are cross-disciplinary, and helps them prepare for the workforce. Additionally, she focused on how the higher education curriculum (MBKM) provided an opportunity for students to demonstrate "a wide range of competencies". This necessary equipping of students was also addressed by another participant, Waluyo, who is a young lecturer at a top public university. He said,

> This curriculum is designed so students can take different programs or outside of the study program according to their passion or the profile they expected. So that they can design their portfolios or transcripts according to what they want. This meant that it made them different as individuals from others. Consequently, employers had information to enable them to decide whether they were accepted or not in their companies. (Waluyo)

Waluyo's idea is that through the MBKM curriculum, higher education institutions have provided an opportunity for university students to start creating and managing their careers or portfolios as early as possible, even before they graduate. It is up to the students to decide whether or not to take advantage of the available options from universities.

However, the two participants found that their students need more awareness about their career planning which may negatively impact their career management. When asked about the challenges of implementing the MBKM curriculum, Purnama mentioned, "the main challenging part in the implementing this curriculum is that sometimes students are not really aware of their future or career goal". This means that understanding the career goals requires great determination and effort by her students. Furthermore, two participants (Purnama and Nina) shared a similar perspective. Nina emphasized that it is vital for students to be aware of their "career goal" as it impacts how they decide and develop their goal-directed behaviours, such as career self-management. By what the students do and their choice, individuals may alter their likelihood of obtaining desired employment. She noted that,

> As long as the students are aware of what kind of profile they want in the future or their interests, this will define how they come up with an effective action plan to respond to the changing of the MBKM curriculum integrated into the higher education curriculum so that they benefit themselves. (Nina)

Even though from this conversation does not refer to the impacts of the MBKM curriculum as a research question of this study, however, this focuses on how "the MBKM curriculum" can support students' employability effectively. It is likely that personal awareness will impact on the way that students design and manage their careers (career self-management). Additionally, this becomes the strong foundation for the students to gain employability.

Discussion of the findings

Based on the findings of this study, all university lecturers voiced that the MBKM curriculum provides opportunities for students to design and manage their portfolios according to their passions or career goals. The study corroborates the existing literature (Maipita et al., 2020; Purwanti, 2021) by finding evidence that the MBKM curriculum has provided various options of programs that allow students as individual in practicing to design their career journey in the early stage before they enter the actual workplace. Therefore, through various options of programs, students are expected to learn to manage their careers, which can contribute to their employability skills. This links to the notion of employability as a process by Holmes (2013), which concerns how internal factors influence individuals' behaviours, such as career self-management, toward their career trajectories. However, a lack of self-awareness affects students' behaviours which impedes the purpose of the MBKM programs in improving graduate employability skills.

Purnama and Waluyo identified that a positive impact of the MBKM curriculum is to facilitate university students with the process that allows them to design their portfolio in accordance with their future careers. Students make choices in the transition period from school to work that allow them to achieve job satisfaction and success while also being satisfied in their life. Choosing a future career is one of the most significant decisions that students face during their development (Ozek & Ferraris, 2018). Moreover, career management is a significant factor that impacts the quality of life and spans a considerable portion of life (Aka & Tazar, 2020). It is implied that the MBKM curriculum has addressed the importance of students' behaviour in their career design to support their employability skills.

This discussion ultimately leads to the framework graduate employability as process that Holmes (2013) developed, students as individuals are not "mere pawns in a game, just 'victim' of a system stacked in favour of the few and against the many"; their future is influenced by

their actions and decisions (p.548). Based on Waluyo's quote, the importance of knowing

"passion or profile that they (students) expected", it will lead them to their action or behaviour. Individual behaviour significantly impacts graduate employability (Ozek & Ferraris, 2018). Individual behaviour is also highly linked to career self-management. Moreover, career self-management is a critical element in gaining employability, which is associated with career exploration, guidance seeking, and networking (Okay-Somerville & Scholarios, 2015).

However, as reflected in Nina's and Purnama's comments, the university students lacked self-awareness, negatively affecting their career self-management toward implementing the MBKM curriculum. Self-awareness promotes a more conscious attitude to decision-making (Ozek & Ferraris, 2018). Self-awareness includes the capacity for self-reflection and thinking, which requires discovering a personal voice (Covey, 2004), as well as the ability to understand individuals' true nature and the freedom to select how they consciously desire to respond to life (Goleman et al., 2002). Additionally, Ozek and Ferraris (2018) report that a lack of self-awareness may cause difficulty in making career decisions, which affects how individuals decide and act toward their careers. If students encounter difficulty in their career decision-making, it will hinder students from managing their career trajectories in gaining employability skills which affects the effectiveness of the MBKM curriculum.

CONCLUSION

Nowadays, higher education institutions should provide curricula which facilitate students not only to master their knowledge but also to improve their employability. The findings of this research may contribute to the implementation of the MBKM curriculum, which can work better to enhance graduate employability. Higher education personnel should work with related stakeholders to ensure students' participation in the MBKM programs achieved to support their employability.

For policymakers, the finding of this study contributes to informing the government to create a comprehensive guidebook in terms of the MBKM curriculum to support students' employability in higher education. The policymakers have created a guidebook called *Buku Panduan Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka* [Independent Campus Program - Independent Learning Guidebook] to implement the MBKM curriculum. However, there is no detailed information regarding implementing eight MBKM programs (Krishnapatria, 2021; Pristina et al., 2022). Therefore, although the universities in Indonesia have used the general guidebook

to guide them, they still have different perceptions of implementation in their institutions.

Next, the implication of this investigation for practices is that lecturers need not only to plan effective teaching methods to support graduate employability in the universities but also to encourage their students to engage more in the programs that benefit them to enhance their employability. For example, lecturers can give appropriate counselling about how to select the programs in the curriculum to university students. Mbah's (2014) study from Cameroon emphasises inadequate student counselling that leads to students selecting the wrong academic programs concerning market demand or a pure absence of relevant programs, courses and subjects requested from potential employers.

Moreover, higher education institutions should be selective in choosing competent partners becomes an important aspect of implementing the MBKM curriculum. It is important to remember that the eight programs in the MBKM curriculum can impact students' employability, depending on whether the activities from industries or partners specifically target students (Ishengoma & Vaaland, 2016). Employability skills may associate with the MBKM programs through active industry engagement. Industry engagement means responsive development for internship students upskilling on development attributes and dispositions to develop employability (Kettle, 2013, p.5). Consequently, the higher education institution should ensure practical and valuable resources to develop university students' employability comprehensively.

Furthermore, higher education institutions in the learning process are to collaborate with other stakeholders to facilitate graduate employability through the MBKM programs. As Harvey and Shahjahan (2013) and Walkington (2014) demonstrate, employability requires collaboration between at least four stakeholder groups: higher education personnel and employers who make strategies available and students and alumni actively who initiate and make the most of these strategies. In other words, universities cannot work alone without the support from others related parties in developing student employability (Pham, 2022).

This study can be helpful for researchers to investigate further related to employability. For example, exploring students' employability skills based on university student perspectives. A critical point drawn from this study is that instead of exploring only the implementation of the MBKM curriculum, which the current literature tends to focus on, more studies should be conducted on exploring the extent to which the MBKM programs support university students' employability. The literature on employability as the research topic is underexplored in

Indonesia. Thus, this study can be a starting point for developing employability for university students in this context.

Limitation

The limitations of this study concern the data collection process. Firstly, the limited data collected in this project were from a small sample size of participants. This influenced how the generalisable information would be gathered. However, when small-scale effort like this is shared, according to Bold (2013), others with similar experiences and stories can relate, thereby making such reliable and valid projects offering relevance for others in similar situations and contexts. Secondly, this study only relies on the interview data since this study did not have any other types of data collection methods, for example, observation or research journals, due to the scope of the research. Lastly, research studies on employability were underdeveloped in Indonesia context; therefore, this research mostly used western theories. It is exactly because of that reason it is expected that this study attempts to fill that gap.

Further directions

Future studies, particularly in addressing the limitations of the current work, may not rely on a single data collection method of interview. In addition to interviews, it may be necessary to use observations to add to the data and back up the claim of lecturers. In this study, a small number of university lecturers were involved as participants. It may be necessary to involve a large sample of lecturers to get data that can be used to draw general conclusions. Finally, future research may investigate more local traditions, interests, and theories that can be merged with western theories to form a research framework.

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