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Communication in Graduate Marketability: Barriers or Opportunities?

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Abstract: This study is a conceptual and literature review in which it explains the significance of communication to prospective graduates in particular as a potential marketability to them. A critical analysis was conducted through this study to look at the two importance's of communication in graduate marketability, specifically, barriers and opportunities to employment. Based on critical studies, communication will be able to form barriers if graduates do not demonstrate interaction abilities, especially during the interview sessions conducted. On the other hand, communication skills will be an opportunity to marketability if they are able to highlight interaction abilities during the interview session, especially while responding to enquiries modelled by the interviewers. Finally, the university essential improves prospective graduates' communication abilities at their earlier levels of study in order to figure out some noble communication skills as a marketability opportunity once they graduate from institutions of higher learning, whether in the public or private sector.

Keywords: Marketability, Barriers, Opportunities, Communication, Interviews

1. Introduction

In line with the concept of 21st century learning, marketability is increasingly competitive and irritating. The unemployment rate is also increasing, leading to removal among graduates. With job offers, job opportunities, and services, opportunities and spaces in employment platforms are shrinking (Muhammad Ariff, Beatrice, & Janice, 2017). Thus, graduates need to organize themselves with various skills, exclusively for communication. This is because communication is something that will be measured during the interview process and the interview itself. The weakness and anxiety of some students in communicating make their probability of getting a proper job higher. This is because job interviewers repeatedly place the criteria of interaction and communication abilities as the main requirements of the job, especially in innumerable languages or English (Manjet Kaur, 2021). Through interaction and communication, graduates underlined speaking skills, resolving issues

spontaneously, as well as the ability to negotiate with others, especially clients and colleagues (Abdul Rashid & Mohamad Daud, 2005). To encounter these criteria, vicissitudes in communication mastery in 360 degrees' requirement to be done for the preparation and integration of competencies to face the marker job (Ong, Chang & Arina, 2020).

Communication deals with an individual's ability to display confidence. Stereotypically, communication involves two-way interaction, whether it involves numerous or insufficient individuals. According to Ahmad (2012), graduates' prerequisite is to organize themselves with communication abilities as early as at university level. One of the best examples is that students are always committed to making the presentation given by the lecturer. Presentation creativity should also be done by conducting interventions and complaints of digital-based concepts, info graphics, and other materials. Through presentation provision, students increased their communication confidence, especially while commerce with some enormous listeners. This ability is like an exact critical credibility because communication is an appreciated competency advantage that sees the integrity of the interaction between human actualities.

Prospective graduates need to contemplate this in depth. If there are obstacles and problems, it is essential to identify the weaknesses and overcome them through self-rehabilitation methods or other approaches. Restoration of communication confidence can be done through frequency and the ability to organize and fit some arguments. Evocative language prearrangement is imperative to confirm that the memo conveyed to the listener is undoubtedly understood. However, if the listener does not comprehend the message, it indicates that the communication way is motionless feeble and needs improvement either in terms of the content of the message or the speaker.

The speaker or individual speaking needs to see the weaknesses of the material and form confidence as well as communication potential. Authority and competence cultivate the outcome of something that is to be achieved through negotiation or presentation. As previously stated at the university level, prospective graduates evaluated various requirements once interactive (Ong, Chang, & Arina, 2020). Among them are preparation before communication, graphic and visual information support, coherent arrangement of ideas, and selection of intonation that is compulsory in line with feelings suitable for the presentation.

As an initial step in the request for the values of producing confident graduates while speaking, the presentation activities at the university are essential for students. Random selection of students is not possible as it bounds the communication potential of a minority of students. Instructors or lecturers need to ensure students' anxiety levels are reduced through a presentation approach. In fact, in 2002, the issue of marketability showed that communication factors during interviews became a failure to get employment. The opinion was once expressed by the former chief executive officer of Proton, Tengku Tan Sri Mahaleel Tengku Ariff. This shows that this issue has been debated for many years until now, in 2021. The question is, why is this still an issue even though it has been going on for ages?

2. Research Background

According to Sofiana and Zamri (2019), 21st century education strappingly emphasizes the competency aspect of graduates. Accordingly, the importance of communication as a requirement in the national education system (Sofiana & Zamri, 2019). Communication preparation and competence needs are aspects of interaction ability and effectiveness of students' communication content (Ainun, Zamri & Wan Muna, 2017). Strengthening communication should be emphasized by all institutions of higher learning, whether public or private, in line with the education blueprint which outlines the importance of communication as cultivated as early as the level of education at the primary level. Inappropriately, communication skills remain unresolved despite various approaches, education, and interventions being done (Badrul Hisham, 2016). Previous studies identified that digital communication use for communication competency is achieved. Communication research needs to be applied during the application of learning achievement for practice, behavior, and empathy (Nurul Jamilah, Nursyamimi & Rahmahtunnisah, 2015; Nurul Salmi & Mohd Isa, 2014).

3.   Issues and Problem Statement

The ability to communicate is a super important element for university students, especially final year undergraduates, for future work preparation. Lecturers and instructors are powerfully encouraged to use two-way communication techniques to increase students' confidence in interacting and acquiescing to ideas during the learning process. Interaction and communication techniques are proficient at testing the extent of students' abilities and confidence while edifying social relationships between individuals (Borzi & Mills, 2001; Benecke & Bezuidenhout, 2011). In fact, communication weakness is an issue that needs to be addressed because Abdul Rashid and Mohamad Daud (2005) found that students' inactive and active communication is influenced by their level of knowledge. Through communication, students' cognitive skills are industrialized through the arrangement of ideas that are accessible. Student excellence is habitually associated with communication competence.

However, Hassal et al. (2013) found that some excellent students are still poor at communicating. Some excellent students fail to get a job during the interview process. The main contributors to the success of the interview process are communication and interaction skills with the interviewer (Feng & Burleson, 2008). In this regard, the researchers are optimistic that communication-related interventions among university students will be enhanced as they are conducted in the United States. Studies related to communication among university students have been conducted in many developed countries, especially the United States, to warrant the marketability of graduates in line with academic excellence.

The problems of this study have been clarified in previous studies that show the existence of weaknesses in communication among graduates. Male students are more confident in communicating compared to female students, especially during public speaking activities. A study conducted by McCroskey (2009) showed that humble personality also contributes to the weakness of graduates to communicate well because of embarrassment, anxiety or deficiency of knowledge. Thus, the Minister of Higher Education, Datuk Dr. Noraini Ahmad, explained that the Graduate References Hub for Employment and Training or GREaT portal provides various facilities. Among them, it applies to applications for reskilling or new skills, and upskilling to improve skills. Apart from strengthening the training focus and robotics engineering, artificial intelligence (AI) and data engineering, communication empowerment is also necessary (BERNAMA, 2020). This clearly shows that the level of communication among graduates is still the lowest, and improvements are essential.

According to the National Education Philosophy, which sturdily emphasizes the aspect of communication skills among university students, co-curricular activities and the development of interaction skills are continuously emphasized as the platform and prerequisite for learning consequences. In line with the concept of global learning and towards the 21st century, university students are strongly encouraged to learn innumerable languages, especially English as a global language as it is the preferred language in international relations, including business, economics, politics, anthropology, culture, and others.

4.   Communication Problems Among University Students

According to Nurul Salmi and Mohd Isha (2014), institutions of higher learning have a responsibility to provide holistic human capital in line with the requests of national development. In the 21st century, state-of-the-art learning is gaining a higher status with the provision of dynamic learning materials and the need for practical human capital. Practical individuals are categorized as hands-on-oriented, in which their category is aligned with high-quality and moral human beings (Hallahan et al., 2007). However, university students need to have dominant soft skills, including social and communication skills.

In a study conducted by Nurul Salmi and Mohd Isha (2014), university students confined to their respective fields communicate well if they discuss issues related to their respective fields. Azizi et

al. (2010) reflect that students' limits in coming up with topics come because they excavate the syllabus and have excellent memorization. However, memorization techniques are not practical for good communication competencies due to the existence of message limitations and constraints. In fact, memorization methods limit an individual's knowledge because they influence their competence in developing ideas. Daly and Stafford (2008) found that communication ability should be highlighted through the panache and custom of presenting information and receiving information. If the information is well received, it shows the presenter has a competent style and routine. On the other hand, if the information conveyed is difficult to interpret or comprehend, then it indicates the interaction between the presenter and the receiver is feeble. The memorization method is widely used by some students once they create some project presentations. The question is, what if students are given assignments that involve spontaneous and radical delivery?

Spontaneous and radical presentation is a communication method while an individual joins a job interview. Prognosticators form interviews that are either structured or unstructured. Thus, students need to deepen their communication abilities even if it only involves presentations in class. University students' communication weaknesses are frequently revealed by their potential inability to create presentations in class (Koponen, Eeva, & Pekka, 2010). Several studies have been conducted, including identifying factors and contributing aspects of student faintness. Among the main factors is the leakage of information from the sender. The communicator of information plays an important role in creating a productive communication environment based on response nose-dives for understanding between the presenter and the recipient (Mazlan, 2011; Borzi & Mills, 2001).

Channels in communication are also important to confirm the completeness of the information conveyed is clear and accurate. Disruption of communication channels also needs to be identified for flatness of information conveyed and received appropriately (Preacher & Selig, 2012). Thus, while the information is being conveyed, the audiophile desires to have competent and detailed listening skills by focusing on the information being conveyed by the information presenter (Mohd Najib & Nor Shafrin, 2008).

5. Model and Theory of Communication

The study of Thoma et al. (2019) found that communication models in education evaluate several aspects of students' abilities and competencies while speaking. In fact, many studies have looked at the effects of speech as well as factors that influence students 'propensity to interact while learning (Arora, 2018; Chan et al., 2018; Locke et al., 2009). However, what if this aspect of communication became one of the assessments in learning? The main question that will be highlighted is: can students achieve assessment and the extent to which the assessment done by the instructor or lecturer is holistic and covers all aspects? The limitations assessed involve a lot of student communication in groups (Gruppen et al., 2018). Other than that, Mcelroy (2013) explains that students' team communicators are more confident because of interaction and involve a share of communicators. On the other hand, communication affects students' confidence when dependent on individual assessment (Junjie et al., 2020; Azizi et al., 2010). In this study, two approaches, namely the Berlo Communication Model (BCM) and Group Thinking Theory (GTT), are referred to because these two elements involve individual and team communication.

5.1 Berlo Communication Model (BCM)

In the past, researchers assumed that this communication was a linear requirement because it only involved the delivery between messages. However, Nurul Jamilah, Nursyamimi and Rahmatunnisah (2015) stressed that communication must be meaningful and able to convey the message perfectly in line with effective content and channels. In the context of this study, the researchers refer to the Berlo Communication Model (BCM) to identify four streams and phases of communication for messages and content implemented effectively as appropriately channeled. The four communication streams found in this model are source, message, channel and receiver. This model was introduced in 1960 by a communications researcher named David Kenneth Berlo. Berlo explains that an effective flow of

communication requires a commitment to these four things and then needs to be complemented by behavior, community socialization, culture and knowledge of the things being discussed. This model was developed for people's communication improvements (Arora, 2018; Benecke & Bezuidenhout, 2011).

Table 1 is a summary of the elements found in the BCM. This model has four factors, namely: sender, communication skills, attitude, and knowledge. These four factors have a relationship with each other in determining the accomplishment of an interaction and the effectiveness of communication. The first aspect is the sender. According to Susan et al. (2020), the sender is the individual responsible for conveying information to the recipient. Businesstopia (2018) also explains that sender effectiveness will be influenced by attitudes, knowledge, social and cultural systems. If the sender fails to control all disruptions in the delivery of information, it will cause the content of the communication delivered to fail to be received by the recipient. The second factor is communication skills. These communication skills involve both sender and receiver. Skills have a connection between the ability and capability to speak, convey information, and provide understanding of each other (Aveni, 2015; Koponen & Pekka, 2010). In addition, the third factor, attitude, is an important thing in BCM. Attitude will affect the effectiveness or failure of communication as it will involve one's commitment. Resilient commitment will create positive and successful communication (Eva et al., 2020; Arubela et al., 2020). Knowledge creates the substance and foundation for the clarity and strength of communication information. If the presenter has deprived knowledge, it will make the communication process ineffective and, in turn, be evaluated with a negative score by the recipient.

The study of Bishop, Bauer and Becker (1998) explains that attitudes and behaviors while communicating are influenced by the stylishness and knowledge a person possesses. Individuals who lack knowledge will exhibit disorganized attitudes and behaviors. The implication is that the flow of conversation is disrupted due to poor development of philosophies. Among other effects, they fail to organize ideas and explain things according to an appropriate sequence of events (Vos, 2009). It is unfortunate if it happens among university students who have to do a presentation for which it is being evaluated and graded by the lecturer. Through BCM, university students need to be exposed to the procedures that need to be monitored when communicating. These skills are also a practical preparation for workplace requirements.

According to BCM, student-based implementation should involve scrutiny of the level of importance of the information received so that the information recognition process is refined. filtering information to distinguish between significant, less central, and insignificant sources. Through this action, message recognition is enabled. The message to be conveyed desires to be scrutinized in order to understand the commands perfectly. Instruction is the first phase before any work movements and assignments are initiated. In the flow of channels, the direction of communication needs to be identified so that the content of the message is channeled to the appropriate channel. This includes platforms used for either verbal or non-verbal communication.

Table 1- Communication Process According to Berlo Communication Model (BCM)

Proses	Statement
Source	A source is a transmission of information provided by one person to another individual. In the context of this study, the source refers to the information that will be presented by the students to the audience during the presentation session conducted based on the information required by the lecturers in the findings of the experimental study.
Message	The message is the content delivered by the student making the presentation. The feedback process is essential to see the effectiveness of the message being delivered accurately or vice versa. Therefore, feedback will be obtained to identify weaknesses and communication barriers that occur during the delivery process.

Channel	Channels are the means or methods used by students during a presentation. Since the study is blended, there are two channels that will be conducted, namely face-to-face and virtual. Both of these applications will be conducted to see if there are differences in aspects of the effectiveness of content delivery and reception in communication. This is because the national education policy for the 21st century is increasingly actively introducing the concept of e-learning as a platform that supports global online learning.
Receiver	Recipient feedback is the culmination of this model. The feedback provided is an important study finding as an evaluation will be conducted. The researcher will evaluate both aspects of the feedback, whether it is communication or presentation, virtually or online. Weaknesses and shortcomings will be identified through comments and suggestions given by recipients through questionnaires, observations and interviews.

5.2 Group Thinking Theory (GTT)

Group Thinking Theory (GTT) was introduced by Janis in 1982. GTT is an important tool for organizations and employees to assist in making decisions cooperatively. Collaborative and team discussions are conducted to achieve the finest outcomes. According to Erina and Tri Angga (2018), in the communication approach, GTT is used to get superlative thinking results, whereby it sees the tendency of the thinker to influence the decision, among other decisions. GTT communication is exploited as a trigger for conflict if it fails to be controlled and is deeply applied. Among the things included include goals, suitability, trust, unity, communication and negotiation skills, leadership, and internal and external support. In the context of GTT requirements for graduates, Mauroner and Azchau (2021) explain that the value of student loyalty will be measured by the extent to which they are able to encounter the objectives and opinions of other members of the group. Negative attitudes will also be manifested through verbal or physical conflicts. Among the negative actions of GTT are: students may disband the group and form a new one, or just slant in their self-communication. GTT is really determining communication in dynamic and holistic working groups. The main function of GTT is to ensure that conflicts and disagreements can be reduced. GTT does not support the concept of individual communication because it prioritizes group communication norms over personal communication norms.

Motivation and loyalty as well as responsibility are the main domains of GTT. All information, channels and views will be discussed together and completed collectively. The concept of GTT is to help individuals, especially those who are in misfortune. Consequently, in the concept of this study, students will be unprotected from the concept of GTT because various tasks and activities involve teams (Erina & Tri Angga, 2018). The ability of students to work in a team is among the commitments and essences listed as career competencies. This is especially important if students are working for a team job performance, especially if they are in joint Japanese organizations. Their communication emphasizes various features of GTT in regular professions. The implementation of GTT in communication, especially among university students, is important in facilitating and strengthening graduate communication. The revolution and evolution of communication play an important role in building confidence in communicating. Negotiation methods and techniques are important to ensure that communication has a positive consequence. Through communication, the main objective to be achieved is to ensure that emotional well-being in group members is formed through negotiation and collective discussion. The GTT approach among graduates is compulsory to form a professional and positive attitude while they are present in job interviews (Mauroner & Azchau, 2021). Interview techniques usually highlight issues and provocative questions which require estimations and interpretations. If the graduates interviewed fail to provide a constructive explanation, then it describes their attitude. The values and results of their views will be taken into account as one of the personalities of the graduates who will work. Thus, prospective graduates' prerequisite is to identify the most appropriate problems and methods to ensure emotional well-being and that the job interview process

runs efficiently. Emotional appropriateness is expressly imperative when graduates attend job interviews.

6. Critical Analysis of the Study

Table 2 and Figure 1 shows the critical analysis linked to the issues as well as problems of the study. The blue color box shows previous studies that explain issues and problems (competition in work, interaction confidence and lack of personality). The red boxes are the problems discussed in previous studies that focus on aspects of negotiation ability, exposure during learning, current issues, communication empathy, communication limitations, choice of communication style, frequency of communication during learning and competence to convey information and messages. Finally, the yellow box is a previous study that emphasizes only issues without problems, namely the requirement for online communication, the integrity of communicative content and the parallel between academic achievement and communication competence.

Table 2 - Critical Analysis of Research Issues and Problems

Analysis of Past Studies		Issues	Problems
Muhammad Ariff, Beatrice & Janice (2017)	Competition in work	🟦	🟦
Benecke & Bezuidenhout (2011)	Confidence Interaction	🟦	🟦
McCroskey (2009)	Lack of Personality	🟦	🟦
Abdul Rashid & Mohamad Daud (2005)	Ability in Negotiation		🟥
Ahmad (2012)	Lack of Exposure during Study		🟥
Ong, Chang & Arina (2020)	Lack of Awareness in Current Needs		🟥
Nurul Jamilah, Nursyamimi & Rahmahtunnisah, (2015)	The Value of Empathy in Communication		🟥
Azizi et al. (2010)	Limitations of Communication Abilities		🟥
Daly & Stafford (2008)	Selection of Communication Style		🟥
Koponen, Eeva & Pekka (2010)	Frequency of Communication during Study		🟥
Mazlan (2011) & Susan et al. (2020)	Competence in Conveying Messages and Information		🟥
Sofiana & Zamri (2019)	Online Communication Needs	🟨	
Ainun, Zamri & Wan Muna (2017)	Integrity of Communication Content	🟨	
Hassal et al. (2013)	Academic Excellence is Not in Line with Communication Abilities	🟨	

All these issues and problems are a critical analysis of the study that emphasizes the obstacles and challenges challenged by graduates in facing job marketability. All these issues and problems can form into a barrier to marketability if they are not well achieved by graduates. However, if all these elements are encountered well, it is an opportunity that adds value to the marketability of graduates in getting a job. As with the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the added values that graduates from basic to dominant is online communication. The same goes for aptitude in a second language, especially English, which is a pioneer in enhancing the attractiveness of employers and organizations during the employee selection process.
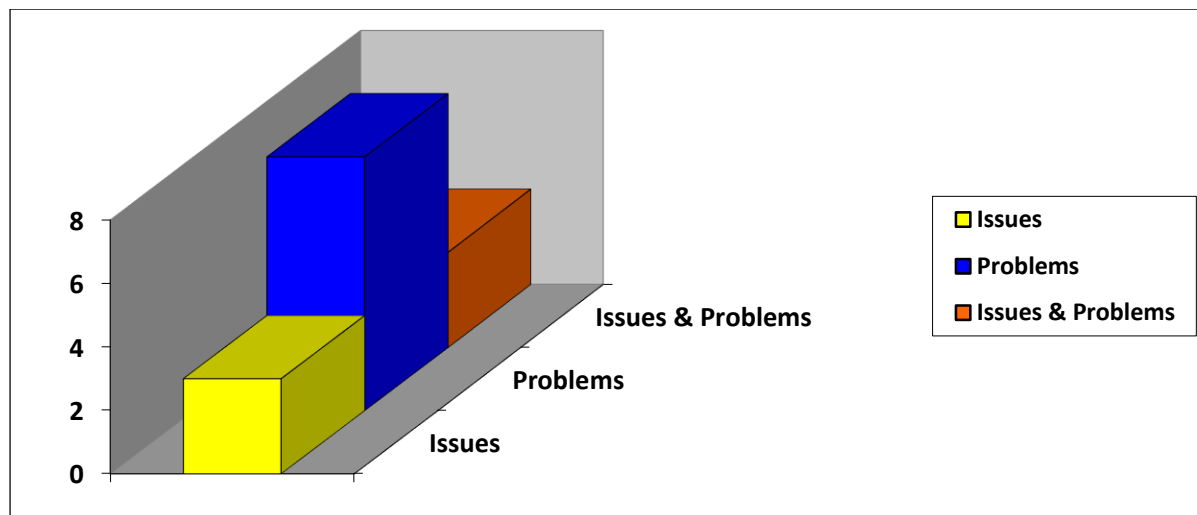
Figure 1- Number of issues and Problems According Critical Analysis

7.   Implications of Communication on Student Marketability

Researchers see that BCM has applicability in e-Learning interventions where the process of identifying constraints and limitations that occur throughout the study is conducted. The BCM approach will be implemented in the conventional mode. The implementation of e-learning communication will use online and technological applications such as Facebook and open learning resources (Syed Lamsah, 2017; Hassal et al., 2013). However, the communication approach must use the aspects and factors highlighted in the BCM, namely the sender, communication skills, attitude and knowledge. For example, in e-learning, students will be assessed in relation to their means of communication to apply the approach highlighted by Berlo virtually (Eva et al., 2020; Susan, 2020). Then, students compared the differences in the effectiveness of student communication using factors in the face-to-face Berlo Model and e-Learning. This study has referred to BCM by taking into interpretation four main factors in the model, namely: sender, communication skills, attitude, and knowledge.

The National Agenda in the track record of this study should be seen as a platform and preparation for the empowerment of educational communication in the 21st century. In line with the attitude of society today, the tendency to channel their views online for speculation or criticism According to Cheng, Abdul Ghani, and Abdul Jalil (2021), the development of communication study models requests to be molded by communication experts for the purpose of educating the next generation, especially university graduates, about integrity and policies that are prerequisite to being maintained while interacting. Proper communication methods and polishes need to be identified specifically to achieve a level of marketability in the trade market. Therefore, the HEIs and lecturers must form a holistic presentation rubric where various requirements in communication are emphasized as a medium towards building a competency of graduates in consultation, interaction and conversation. The approach of two communication mediums, namely face to face communication and on-line communication is the educational agenda that is emphasized at present. This method is categorized as blended communication learning, where presentation sessions during lectures, tutorials, and simulations are implemented in two versions, namely face-to-face and online (Nurhazani & Roshita, 2021). The main implications are that it keeps the time and cost practiced and it strengthens the student communication competency policy.

The importance of communicating to ensure the marketability of graduates According to Md. Atiqur et al. (2021), employee ability is measured through other interpersonal skills, especially communication skills. Competition among outstanding fresh graduates is causing employers and organizations to be increasingly selective in hiring. Thus, communication is a highly prioritized skill (Tang, 2018). Communication is especially useful during interactions with strategic partners, clients, top managers and subordinate employees. It is important when channeling information and conveying information. In addition, in obtaining investment opportunities, good communication is a reason to gain

the conviction and confidence of investors. Deprived of communication, it indicates a person's feebleness. In fact, weaknesses in communication cause negative perceptions of some parties, thus triggering speculation and conflict. As a result, there will be hostility, strife, hostility and which can jeopardize the performance of the organization (Bharathi, 2016).

The reality of employment today is that, despite appearances, academic approval is not the main ticket to getting a job. Competition in the job market must emphasize other elements that are the criteria for evaluating new employees. Among other skills, one is information and communication technology (ICT). The ability to communicate well online is important, especially in today's phenomenon. Knowledge of online communication platforms has become one of the requirements for maintaining human interaction, particularly among work-from-home (WFH) employees. This demand is a shift and practice of innovative norms that is one of the modernizations in employment. Thus, graduates must seize the opportunity to prepare themselves with these skills. A contented attitude in the old notch is a practice that should be avoided as it can cause graduates to get trapped in a comfort zone. This attitude causes graduates to be left behind and fewer skilled (Katherine & Maria, 2019; Ong, Chang & Arina, 2020). Thus, the element of communication must realize requirements in graduates to enable their potential to be developed. Job marketability strongly emphasizes the aspect of communication skills, which talented people use to activate job opportunities and eradicate barriers to attainment in a career.

8.   Conclusion

According to Muhd Khaizer (2020), employers in the present day are discriminating in the assortment of employees. In line with the Industrial Revolution 4.0 (IR4.0), a significant paradigm in the labor sector is the prerequisite for competencies in high technology. Emphasis on Technical Education and Vocational Training (TVET) is highly prioritized in order to produce a competent, skilled graduates at workplace (Fairuzza, Mohamad Nazuir & Wahid, 2011). Conversely, communication needs are still a necessity in employment. Employees continuously requisite interaction and discussion in the workplace. Effectiveness in communication plays an important role in motivating organizational development in specific gaining the trust of customers and investors. Unproductive or ineffective communication contributed an organizational deterioration. In fact, the failure to get the project will arise. Separately from involving relationships with external parties, it also affects the performance of internal organizations which contributes to conflicts, project interruptions and overdue work. Thus, through communication the response process completed rapidly to guarantee that the work context fit adhered to. This ability to communicate refers in communication skills such during applied other language including English or others second and third etymological (Chithra, 2013).

According to Ahmad (2012), intelligibility in communicating needs to be observed by all employees. A lesser number of clear messages affects work teams' squabbles or conflicts between colleagues at the workplace. In today's context, communication through social media must be done well and thoroughly. The spectacle and the message to be shared dispersed elements of persecution or conflict, especially between the client and the organization. As a result, the organization will incur losses and will face impoverishment. The selection of employees must eradicate emotional people on social media for organization status preclusion.

The government continues to implement vicissitudes in the country's talent ecosystem to ensure that the level of marketability of graduates intensifies, expressly after Covid-19. The Minister of Human Resources, Datuk Seri M. Saravanan, recommended that various programs be executed. Among them are the Prihatin Rakyat Economic Stimulus Package (Prihatin), the National Economic Regeneration Plan (Penjana), Economic Protection and Malaysians (Permai), Strategies to Empower People and the Economy (Pemerkasa), as well as Economic Recovery (Pemulih) (Sinar Harian, 2021).

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