

Chapter One

Introduction

In this first chapter, several general information related to the research are presented. The information consists of the study's background and the researcher's arguments in selecting the study topic. Moreover, the part of identification of the problems contains information about the problem to be studied. Afterwards, delimitations of the problem explain ways of solving the problems as the focus of the research. The research questions are also presented consisting of the explanation of the research focus while the objectives of the research are also presented to explain the expected answers from the study. Furthermore, the significance of the research is intended to inform the benefits of research's results that can be developed for certain parties related to this research topic. Finally, the organization of the research provides brief information about the research outline starting from chapter one to chapter five.

Background of the Study

Employability skills are a series of skills, achievements, knowledge, and personalities that shape a person to have the potential to get a job or be employed (Holmes, 2013). Thus, the vital role of employability skills in the formation of a person's career process is the same as the importance of the function of education as a provider of workforce skills. Education is essential for everyone; to take education up to the university level is an achievement for several people. One's educational attainment is also closely related to the prediction of human capital, where the higher the education achieved by a person, the higher the income

earned after they graduate; this is because the economic cycle, demands to employ of skilled workers in their fields (Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2010). According to Carnevale et al. (2010), taking education up to the tertiary level can provide more access to employment opportunities and help improve the work skills of graduates who have the potential to meet job market requirements.

The role of employability skills in preparing students before they enter the world of work is enormous. As mentioned earlier, employability skills help someone in their career process after completing college. Therefore, if this is not done, the quality of university graduates will decrease. According to the data from the Indonesian statistics centre, the unemployment rate for university graduates is about 5.67 % out of a total of 13 million workers in Indonesia calculated in August 2019 (as cited in Rahayu, 2019). Several studies that discuss the causes of unemployment in college graduates showed that the aspect of the high unemployment rate is due to a gap in public's expectations for university graduates related to graduate attributes, professional skills at work, and also job mismatch caused by demand skills that are not comparable to the available jobs (Hossain, et al., 2018; Ferdous, Asad, & Deeba, 2019). Another factor is also caused by the lack of preparation for the provision of employability skills by the university (Purwanti, 2021).

In the meantime, university is a bridge for students to face the transition from university to their desirable labour market; hence, nowadays, universities are required to help develop students' employability (Jackson & Bridgstock, 2021). Therefore, employability is one of the crucial indicators to test the quality of

university graduates when they enter working environment; thus, it can be considered that employability skills are a combination of primary skills, generic skills, main competencies, transferable skills, or personal attributes that can increase students' chances on being accepted when entering work environment (Hadromi et al., 2021). Therefore, universities have to provide students with experience by facilitating or providing various kinds of activities because it is believed that several factors related to employability can be conveyed along with a balanced emphasis on academics, forms of learning, or embedded employability-related activities combined with the official curriculum learning which can even be a tool for assessment (Jackson & Bridgstock, 2021).

Furthermore, the change of Indonesia's minister of education, culture, research, and technology in 2019 created a new standardized rule for universities in Indonesia, namely *Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM, which translated to Freedom to Learn-Independent Campus) program which focuses on facilitating students to increase their knowledge and competence in the real working environment. Learning is carried out outside campus with various forms of activities for students, such as joining internships in industry, building villages, teaching in schools, participating in student exchanges, conducting research at research institutes, joining entrepreneurship development, also employing independent projects and humanitarian projects (Nizam, 2020).

The government's focus in improving the quality of university graduates through internship programs causes universities that have been conducting internship programs for students to be more confident to produce graduates who

are ready to work in their fields. Through internships, students can be motivated to develop knowledge, skills, self-concept, personal characteristics, and motives (Wirawan, Antara, & Prasiasa, 2017). Furthermore, an internship is an activity that can measure students' self-ability in deepening the knowledge they have acquired while studying at the universities (Durack, 2013).

The researcher found that the English Language Education Department (ELED) in one of the private universities in Yogyakarta conducts internship programs from the first until the sixth semester. The provision of an internship program for the said ELED is to prepare students to be highly integrated pre-service teachers according to predetermined parameters. This internship program is implemented in collaboration with the partner schools that work together with the institution. Concerning the development of employability, internship activities conducted by ELED provide an overview of experiences related to the labour market. This internship is considered as a practicum learning activity which is equivalent to three credits in one semester. To pass the internship, students are required to participate in the practical activity by fulfilling the existing requirements.

Partner schools that work together with this internship program consist of various levels of education, namely elementary level to high school level. Considering the place for internship and internship activities, the study program has been arranged in a suitable way so that the two parties (the partner school and the university students) can organize the implementation of internship activities to match their learning hours in university.

The internship programs prepared by the ELED provide four levels of internship, namely internship level I (teaching and learning observation), internship level II (teaching and learning observation), internship level III (developing teaching instrument), and internship level IV (teaching practice). Therefore, students are required to join all internship programs prepared by the ELED from the first semester until the sixth semester. Additionally, students need two semesters to complete one internship period at each school level. The internship carried out by the ELED is purposed to assist students' hard and soft skills development that will be necessary later when they work as teachers or lecturers which are one of the graduate profiles of this program study.

The English Language Education Department (ELED) implements a compulsory-based internship program. This program is considered appropriate because the research by Silva et al. (2016) showed that compulsory-based internship programs could reduce post-graduation unemployment by 28%. However, the internship at ELED turned out to have a problem related to the limited time in its implementation. The internship implementation process is carried out in a total period of 25 hours each semester. So, with the limited time available, will it help fully equip students with employability skills?

According to Bala and Bala (2020) said that teaching internships, which also carry out in a limited time of 6 hours per week, still made students who took part in the internship gain employability skills (teaching method, improve their language skills, raise the awareness of different learning styles of students).

Meanwhile, Zulfikar et al (2020) also said in their research on "Indonesian Students Perceived Benefits of the Micro-Teaching Course to Their Teaching Internship" that by doing a teaching internship, students can develop their skills, especially employability skills related to basic pedagogical skills, confident; develop communication skills, and most importantly, the micro-teaching class has helped them develop questioning skills.

The two previous studies say that employability skills can be developed during internships. Bala and Bala (2020) and Zulfikar et al (2020) also mentioned what skills were obtained during the teaching internship. However, their research did not mention specific skills that could be implemented when students later became teachers. The research conducted by this researcher will fill the gaps that exist in previous research by showing specifically the skills obtained during the internship that will be implemented during a career as a teacher. This study will show the results of basic research from the opinions of Alumni who have worked as teachers.

In the end, graduate employability requires development that is used to reduce unemployment in Indonesia and the provision of internship programs is one way for students and universities to reach said goal; hence, this issue is intriguing for further research. In addition, this research aims to found out the employability skills the alumni obtained after completing their internship and how the employability skills support on alumni's careers based on their point of view. Afterwards, this phenomenon was investigated more deeply by implementing the

approach according to Holmes (2013) related to employability, namely the possession approach, position approach, and process approach.

Statement of the Problems

This research focused on an internship program conducted by the English Language Education Department (ELED) of a private university in Yogyakarta which is part of the curriculum; thus, all students from the department are required to participate. Previously, the researcher has been directly involved in internship activities carried out at ELED. Researchers learned that students who did internships at the beginning of the semester felt that they did not realize that what they were doing was internships aimed at directing them to acquire work skills.

Internship activities are closely related to the context of the workplace or occupation; therefore, the researcher believed that after participating in said activities, students are expected to obtain a number of new insights and abilities related to occupation or the labour market. Moreover, this study aims to find out whether the provision of an activity such as an internship carried out in a limited time as implemented by said ELED will foster graduate employability skills based on the perceptions of alumni as someone who have participated in the activity.

Additionally, this study aims to find the extent of support of the obtained graduate employability skills on the careers path of each individual who has participated in the activities, which is the alumni of English Language Education Department.

Limitations of the Problems

This research focusses on the graduate employability skills acquired after participating in the internship program and graduate employability skills support toward career path of the students who participated. This research taking place only at English Language Education Department. The data of this study were gathered from six participants which implies that the result of the study cannot be generalized to all alumni who joined the internship program conducted by the ELED. Finally, this research method used in this study is qualitative method.

Research Questions

The research questions that are examined in this research are as follows:

1. What are the types of graduate employability skills acquired from internship based on English Language Education Department alumni's perceptions?
2. How do the employability skills support the career of English Language Education Department alumni?

Objectives of the Research

Based on the research questions, this research aimed to find out:

1. The types of employability skills acquired by English Language Education Department alumni's after the internship program regarding the post internship program experience.
2. The employability skills acquired by English Language Education Department alumni's on supporting their current career.

Significance of the Research

This research aims to provide advantages for several parties, namely language education students, lectures, institution, and other researchers.

English language education students. The results of this study are helpful as additional information for students to be better prepared for their future careers. The students are expected to consider new skills primarily related to the teaching practice that they can develop to enrich themselves with new perspectives and new abilities to continue training.

Lecturers. This research contains information about the absorption of student's achievement towards the internship program compiled from the study program; thus, this information is expected to help lecturers to monitor the implementation of internships to ensure they are effective and to maximize the potential skills that students will acquire during their internships.

Institution. The results of this research are expected to provide benefit for institutions, namely the English Language Education Department and the partner schools of the internship programs. The information from this study is expected to convey the aspirations of students regarding the internship program and the teaching practice activities being carried out. This can be considered as feedback from students so that in the future, this program can provide them with the opportunity to continue adding new activities related to the employability skills enhancement which is useful for students' future careers.

Other researchers. The information presented in this research is expected to help other researchers in their research process as a reference or inspiration for a deeper focus with similar context.

Organization of the Chapter

This research consists of five chapters. In the first chapter, the discussion includes the background of the topic chosen by the researcher and the description of the reason as to why the topic of employability skills in internship programs conducted by ELED was chosen. This chapter also presents the research questions as the research guidelines along with the objectives of the research to provide an overview of the purpose of this research. Furthermore, the first chapter also presents the significances of the research part which discusses the benefits of research for specific parties. Finally, the first chapter also contains the outline of the research in the form of a summary of the contents of each chapter.

Chapter two presents the discussion related to the theory of employability skills and internship programs related to the internship program conducted by the ELED. The first discussion sections are related to employability skills which discuss the graduate employability skills, types of employability skills, and how to develop employability. Furthermore, the last discussion in chapter two discusses the ways employability skills can support the career of students.

Chapter three presents the chosen methodology in this research, started with a discussion of the research design. Next, the research setting, and research participant parts discuss the place to carry out the research and also the criteria for

the research participants. Afterwards, the research instrument and the data collection method parts explain the process to get information from the participants. Finally, the data collection procedure and data analysis are presented in this chapter. The data collection procedure describes the steps taken in the process of collecting data while the data analysis discusses the next process after obtaining the data from the interviews.

Furthermore, chapter four presents the findings from the results collected through the interviews. This chapter also provides a discussion of the findings with existing theories. Finally, chapter five contains the conclusion and recommendations from the research. The conclusion part discusses the results of the study based on the previous chapter. Meanwhile, the recommendation part presents suggestions for certain parties related to the research problems which are expected to be useful in the future.