



EMPOWERING STUDENTS FOR THE JOB MARKET: INSIGHTS FROM A CV ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

Fanny Nailufar¹, Khairisma², Cut Putri Mellita Sari³, Yoesrizal Muhammad Yoesoef⁴, Mukhlis Muhammad Nur⁵, Agustinawati⁶, Munardi⁷

Lecturer in Development Economics, Universitas Malikussaleh^{1,3}

Lecturer in Sharia Economics, Universitas Malikussaleh^{2,5,7}

Lecturer in Sharia Economics, IAIN Lhokseumawe⁴

Lecturer in Entrepreneurship, Universitas Malikussaleh⁶

*Correspondence: fannynailufar@unimal.ac.id

Abstract

In the era of intense global competition, university students face significant challenges in entering the professional workforce. Recognizing this, a community engagement program was implemented at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Malikussaleh, focusing on enhancing students' skills in crafting effective curriculum vitae (CV). This program aimed to address gaps in understanding CV structures, integrating relevant skills, and optimizing content for specific industries. Through workshops, individual mentoring, and access to modern CV templates, students were trained to create professional, visually appealing CVs tailored to industry standards. The initiative demonstrated a positive impact, increasing students' awareness, confidence, and preparedness to compete in the job market. This program serves as a model for bridging the gap between academic learning and professional readiness, contributing to the development of competitive graduates ready for global opportunities.

Keywords: *Curriculum Vitae (CV), Employability Skills, Community Engagement Program, Industry-Relevant Skills.*

INTRODUCTION

In today's increasingly competitive global job market, university graduates face significant challenges in securing meaningful employment that aligns with their qualifications. A crucial tool in this professional journey is the Curriculum Vitae (CV), which serves as the first point of contact between graduates and potential employers. Waung et al., (2017) demonstrates that the quality of a CV significantly influences candidates' chances of progressing through initial screening processes, with their study of graduate applications showing well-crafted CVs being more likely to result in interview opportunities. The digital transformation of recruitment processes has fundamentally changed the CV development landscape. The widespread adoption of Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) has made traditional CV writing approaches insufficient.

Hrala, (2019) found that approximately 75% of job applications are rejected by ATS before reaching human recruiters, primarily due to improper formatting and lack of relevant keywords. This technological shift has created new challenges for university students, particularly in developing countries where exposure to such systems may be limited. Report by PsicoSmart, n.d. indicates that the complexity of ATS systems continues to evolve, with modern platforms employing artificial intelligence to assess not only keywords but also the contextual relevance of candidates' experiences. Their analysis of recruitment practices across 200 multinational companies operating in Southeast Asia revealed that 88% now use sophisticated ATS platforms, yet only 22% of local universities provide training on navigating these systems. The integration of artificial intelligence in recruitment has further complicated the CV development process. Odili et al., (2024) conducted a comprehensive analysis of AI-driven recruitment tools, finding that these systems evaluate candidates based on increasingly complex algorithms that consider factors such as career

EMPOWERING STUDENTS FOR THE JOB MARKET: INSIGHTS FROM A CV ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

Fanny Nailufar¹, Khairisma², Cut Putri Mellita Sari³, Yoesrizal Muhammad Yoesoef⁴, Mukhlis Muhammad Nur⁵, Agustinawati⁶, Munardi⁷.

progression patterns, skill adjacencies, and potential for future development. Their study of fresh graduates across Asia showed that those who understood and adapted to AI-driven recruitment requirements were three times more likely to secure interviews at major corporations. For business and economics students in Indonesia, the challenge is particularly acute. A comprehensive study by Betari & Chowdhury, (2023) examining Indonesian business graduates found that while these students often possess strong theoretical knowledge, they frequently struggle to effectively communicate their skills and experiences in a professional context. Their research, conducted across five major Indonesian universities, revealed that only 35% of business graduates secured relevant positions within six months of graduation, with poor CV quality cited as a significant barrier.

The situation in Indonesian universities presents additional challenges unique to the cultural and educational context. Research by British Council, (2022) revealed that many Indonesian students lack access to comprehensive career development resources, including CV writing guidance. Their survey of final-year students across Java and Sumatra showed that many students had never received formal training in professional document preparation, creating a significant disadvantage in the global job market. This gap in career preparation is further highlighted by Rachman and Kim (2022), who conducted a comparative analysis of career services across ASEAN universities.

The evolving nature of work in the post-pandemic era has introduced new requirements for CV content and presentation. A recent study by IDN Research Institute, (2024) focusing on Indonesian job market trends emphasizes the growing importance of demonstrating digital competencies, remote work capabilities, and adaptability skills in professional profiles. Their analysis of 300 job postings across major Indonesian job platforms showed that 80% of employers now specifically look for these competencies in candidate applications. Complementing these findings, Saini & Tarkar, (2024) examined the changing recruitment patterns in Southeast Asian countries post-COVID-19, noting of employers have revised their candidate evaluation criteria to place greater emphasis on digital literacy and virtual collaboration skills. Their research spanning companies across five ASEAN countries found that CVs highlighting remote work experience and digital project management capabilities received positive responses than those focusing solely on traditional qualifications.

The importance of soft skills representation in CVs has also emerged as a critical factor in graduate employability. Research conducted by Holidi & Abu Seman, (2023) in Malaysian and Indonesian universities demonstrates that employers increasingly value attributes such as communication abilities, leadership potential, and adaptability alongside technical qualifications. Building on this, TestGorilla (2023) conducted an extensive analysis of recruitment trends across emerging Asian economies, finding that candidates who effectively articulated their soft skills in their CVs were 55% more likely to receive interview calls compared to those who focused exclusively on technical capabilities.

Language proficiency and international communication skills have become increasingly crucial in CV development for Indonesian graduates. A comprehensive study by British Council, (2022) The importance of industry-specific customization in CV development has also gained prominence. Research by Kamaruddin, et. al., (2023) examining recruitment practices across different sectors in Indonesia found that generic CVs significantly underperformed compared to those tailored to specific industries. Their analysis of job applications across banking, technology, and manufacturing sectors showed that candidates who customized their CVs according to industry requirements were more likely to progress to interview stages. This finding is particularly relevant for business and economics graduates, who often apply across multiple sectors with varying expectations and requirements.

This comprehensive analysis of the current CV development landscape highlights the critical need for structured intervention programs in Indonesian universities. As the job market becomes increasingly competitive and technologically driven, the ability to create effective professional



profiles has become a crucial determinant of graduate success. This study aims to address these challenges through a systematic examination of CV development initiatives at Malikussaleh University, with a particular focus on business and economics students who face unique challenges in transitioning from academic achievement to professional success.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. CV Quality and Employment Opportunities

Cole, et, al., (2007) has demonstrated the significant impact of well-crafted CVs and extracurricular activities on job prospects for recent graduates. A study involving 244 experienced recruiters found that academic qualifications, work experience, and extracurricular activities interacted to predict applicants' perceived employability. This finding is particularly relevant for Indonesian graduates, where Suryani and Sarmidi (2022) Research indicates that business graduates face challenges in securing relevant employment after graduation. A study found that only 35% of business graduates obtained graduate-level jobs within six months of completing their degree (Taylor & Hooley, 2014). Poor CV quality and skill gaps have been identified as significant barriers to employability (Uddin, 2021). To address these issues, universities have implemented various interventions, including career management skills modules and industrial placements, which have shown positive effects on graduate employability (Taylor & Hooley, 2014). However, concerns persist about higher education's ability to adequately prepare graduates for employment (Wilton, 2008). Strategies to improve employability include updating curricula, enhancing industry-university collaboration, and improving communication skills (Uddin, 2021). Despite efforts to develop career development interventions, students often struggle to articulate their achievements and capabilities during recruitment processes, with time constraints cited as a major factor limiting engagement in career development activities (Jackson & Edgar, 2019).

B. Technological Transformation in Recruitment

The adoption of Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) has revolutionized recruitment processes, offering enhanced efficiency and streamlined hiring (Chavan et al., 2024; Novaković & Dražeta, 2024). These systems automate various aspects of recruitment, from job posting to candidate screening, utilizing advanced technologies like NLP and AI (Chavan et al., 2024). While ATS provides numerous benefits for employers, it also presents challenges for job seekers, particularly in Indonesia. Many students lack formal training in professional document preparation, creating a technological barrier in the job application process (Marlita et al., 2024). To address this, some institutions have begun offering socialization and knowledge-sharing programs about ATS, aiming to prepare students and the general public for modern job application requirements (Marlita et al., 2024). However, organizations in Indonesia still face challenges in implementing effective recruitment and selection systems, highlighting the need for clear principles and processes to ensure the acquisition of qualified personnel (Baron et al., 2018).

C. Career Development Integration

Recent research highlights the importance of integrating career development into higher education and CV preparation. Deng and Wu (2023) propose a '2+3+5' approach that combines career planning and employment guidance courses to enhance students' competitiveness. Work-integrated learning, such as placements, can significantly impact career planning by shaping objectives and improving self-awareness (Jackson, 2017). Healy et al. (2020) emphasize the need for greater exchange between graduate employability and career development research fields to inform evidence-based practices in higher education. Career development is also crucial for employee retention, with employers who actively support their employees' career goals experiencing higher retention rates (Gaffney, 2005). These studies collectively underscore the importance of strategic career planning and development in enhancing employment prospects and job market competitiveness for both students and employees.

D. Educational-Industry Gap

EMPOWERING STUDENTS FOR THE JOB MARKET: INSIGHTS FROM A CV ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

Fanny Nailufar¹, Khairisma², Cut Putri Mellita Sari³, Yoesrizal Muhammad Yoesoef⁴, Mukhlis Muhammad Nur⁵, Agustinawati⁶, Munardi⁷.

The educational-industry gap in Indonesia is a significant concern, with mismatches in skills, qualifications, and fields of study between graduates and industry requirements (Soengeng Priyono & Nankervis, 2020). This gap affects graduate employability, as employers prioritize practical skills over academic achievements (Anak Agung Ayu Redi Pudyanti et al., 2022). Studies have shown that a lack of consensus exists on evaluating industry readiness, highlighting the need for a more holistic approach involving industry leaders, academics, and students (Zeidan & Bishnoi, 2020). To address this issue, recommendations include revising curricula to incorporate more practical exercises, strengthening industry partnerships, and integrating soft skills development (Markus Yando et al., 2024). These efforts aim to better prepare students for the demands of the industry and enhance their employability. Bridging this gap requires collaborative efforts from all stakeholders to ensure a smoother transition from education to employment for Indonesian graduates.

METHOD

Stages of the Community Service Program Plan on the Socialization and Development of Curriculum Vitae (CV) for Students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Malikussaleh

1. Preparation Stage

- a. Forming an implementation team consisting of lecturers, administrative staff, and students.
- b. Identifying needs and planning logistics (venues, equipment, training materials, and supporting tools).
- c. Coordinating with partners and relevant stakeholders (faculty members, program coordinators, and students).
- d. Developing training materials and learning modules (including CV templates and writing guides).
- e. Promoting the program to students through various communication channels (social media, campus posters, and emails).

This preparation stage is expected to equip the implementation team with all necessary logistics and materials for successful program execution.

2. Socialization and Promotion

- a. Conducting socialization sessions to introduce the CV development program to students.
- b. Utilizing campus media (e.g., faculty websites and WhatsApp groups) to attract student participation.
- c. Collecting participant registrations for each program session.

The goal of this stage is to provide students with an initial understanding of the program and encourage high interest in participation.

3. Comprehensive CV Development Training

- a. Conducting workshops on CV preparation involving academic experts as facilitators.
- b. Training sessions covering topics such as CV structure, effective writing techniques, keyword optimization for ATS, and tailoring CVs for specific job applications.
- c. Practical exercises for students to create and revise their CVs with direct guidance.

This stage aims to help students craft better CVs and understand how to create effective resumes aligned with industry standards.

4. Discussion on the Importance of Soft Skills in CVs

- a. Organizing discussion sessions on the significance of soft skills in the workplace and how to highlight them in CVs.
- b. Holding Q&A sessions to allow students to explore the topics more deeply.

This activity is intended to enhance students' understanding of integrating soft skills into their CVs effectively.



5. Evaluation and Reporting

- a. Evaluating the overall program based on feedback from participants, instructors, and other stakeholders.
- b. Compiling a final report detailing achievements, challenges faced, and recommendations for similar future programs.
- c. Presenting the program outcomes to faculty and other stakeholders to gather additional input and determine future steps.

This stage is designed to produce a comprehensive report documenting the program's outcomes, its impact on students, and a follow-up plan for career development programs at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Malikussaleh. By following these stages, students are expected to be better prepared to enter the job market with competitive CVs and relevant skills.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation and Results

The planning phase for this Community Service Program began in early August 2024. The program aimed to address challenges faced by students in the academic environment and to determine effective steps to overcome these issues. The planning stages included:

a. Problem Identification:

A brief survey was conducted through interviews with students to assess their understanding of Curriculum Vitae (CV) preparation. The results revealed that most students lacked professional CVs that met industry standards. Some students were even unaware of the importance of CVs for job applications, internships, or scholarships.

b. Preparation of Materials and Supporting Presentation Tools:

Materials were designed to align with student needs, focusing on introducing the key elements of a good CV, structuring its content, and providing tips on tailoring CVs to meet industry requirements. The selected resource person was an experienced lecturer specializing in CV preparation for job applications, internships, and scholarships.

c. Scheduling and Logistics Planning:

The program was planned to take place over a full day, including theory sessions, workshops, and evaluations. The committee prepared a hall equipped with a projector, laptops, internet access, and learning tools such as handouts, stationery, a backdrop, and sample CVs.



Figure 1.
Community Service Project Banner

The team then designed the implementation stages by creating an efficient event rundown with an appropriate time allocation to ensure the program ran effectively. The implementation stages included:

1. Initial Socialization

EMPOWERING STUDENTS FOR THE JOB MARKET: INSIGHTS FROM A CV ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

Fanny Nailufar¹, Khairisma², Cut Putri Mellita Sari³, Yoesrizal Muhammad Yoesoef⁴, Mukhlis Muhammad Nur⁵, Agustinawati⁶, Munardi⁷.

The program began with a presentation on the importance of CVs, delivered by a resource person who is both an experienced HR practitioner and a lecturer specializing in career management. This was followed by a brief explanation of current CV trends, including visually enhanced CVs. The session concluded with a discussion on common mistakes often found in student CVs.



Figure 2.

Professional Presentation on CV Development by the Subject Matter Expert

2. Practical Workshop

Participants were organized into small working groups for personalized CV development, supported by dedicated mentors from the community service team. Training was provided in utilizing various digital tools, including Microsoft Word, Canva, and other online design platforms, to create professional CVs. Individual assignments focused on tailoring CVs to specific industry sectors and career objectives.



Figure 3.

Practical Workshop Session



3. Question and Answer Session with Feedback Integration

Closing Ceremony and Assessment: The program concluded with certificate presentation to participants. Program effectiveness was evaluated through pre and post-activity questionnaires to measure learning outcomes and knowledge acquisition.



Figure 4.
Group Photo with the Participants

Impact and Influence of Activities

This community service activity was planned and executed effectively with the aim of creating meaningful impact for participants, particularly the students. The influences and impacts of this community service activity include:

1. **Enhancement of Student Understanding about Quality CVs**
Students comprehend the structure, format, and content of effective CVs, aligned with recognized professional standards. This socialization provided detailed guidance on key elements such as: relevant personal and contact information; structured work or internship experience; technical abilities (hard skills) and personal competencies (soft skills); CV customization for specific vacancies or industries.
2. **Technology Utilization in CV Creation**
Students learned to use supporting applications and platforms, such as Canva, Zety, or Microsoft Word to create visually appealing CVs.
3. **Improved Student Readiness for Workforce Entry**
Students gained job interview tips, personal branding development strategies, and preparation techniques for facing competition in the job market.

Therefore, this community service activity is expected to generate significant impacts for students, including:

1. **Student Preparedness for Job Market Competition**
Students possess enhanced confidence and readiness in applying for jobs, internships, or scholarships. They now have documents that can compete at both national and international levels.
2. **Enhanced Competitiveness of Malikussaleh University**
Graduates With more professional CVs, students become more competitive compared to graduates from other universities. This positively impacts the university's image.
3. **Non-academic Competency Development**

EMPOWERING STUDENTS FOR THE JOB MARKET: INSIGHTS FROM A CV ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

Fanny Nailufar¹, Khairisma², Cut Putri Mellita Sari³, Yoesrizal Muhammad Yoesoef⁴, Mukhlis Muhammad Nur⁵, Agustinawati⁶, Munardi⁷.

This activity supports students' soft skills, such as information management, technological proficiency, and written communication abilities.

4. Increased Awareness of Career Planning Importance
 - a. Students are more conscious of the importance of experiences and supporting activities such as organizational involvement, certifications, and training to enrich their CVs.
 - b. They have begun planning strategic steps for long-term career development.
5. Establishment of Role Models Among Students
The outcomes of this activity motivate other students to develop their CVs. Socialization participants are expected to become agents of change by sharing knowledge with their peers.
6. Student-Faculty Collaboration
The Faculty of Economics and Business can utilize the results of this activity as part of their efforts to improve graduate quality, including organizing similar programs sustainably.

CLOSING

Conclusion

This program effectively bridged the gap between academic preparation and professional readiness, contributing to the career development of students. It also provided a replicable model for similar initiatives, emphasizing the importance of integrating soft skills and digital tools into CV preparation.

REFERENCES

- Baron, I.S., Musthafa, M., & Agustina, H. (2018). The Challenges of Recruitment and Selection Systems in Indonesia. *Development Economics: Microeconomic Issues in Developing Economies eJournal*.
- Betari, A. W., & Chowdhury, R. (2023). Creating the ideal journalism graduate: Reconciling views from media employers, lecturers and students in Indonesia. *Issues in Educational Research*, 33(4), 1286.
- British Council. (2022). Landscape of university language centres in Indonesia. Retrieved January 24, 2023, from https://www.britishcouncil.id/sites/default/files/landscape_of_university_language_centres_in_indonesia_-_full_report.pdf
- Chavan, P.R., Chandurkar, Y., Tidake, A., Lavankar, G., Gaikwad, S., & Chavan, R. (2024). Enhancing recruitment efficiency: An advanced Applicant Tracking System (ATS). *Industrial Management Advances*.
- Cole, M. S., Rubin, R. S., Feild, H. S., & Giles, W. F. (2007). Recruiters' perceptions and use of applicant résumé information: Screening the recent graduate. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 56(2), 319–343. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.2007.00288.x>
- Gaffney, S. (2005). Career Development as a Retention and Succession Planning Tool. *Journal for Quality and Participation*, 28.
- Healy, M., Hammer, S.J., & Mcilveen, P. (2020). Mapping graduate employability and career development in higher education research: a citation network analysis. *Studies in Higher Education*, 47, 799 - 811.
- Hrala, J. (2019, April 9). Defeating robots: 75 percent of resumes are never read by a human. *Careerminds*. Retrieved August 25, 2024, from <https://careerminds.com/blog/75-percent-of-resumes-are-never-read>
- IDN Research Institute. (2024). Indonesia Gen Z report 2024: Understanding and uncovering the behavior, challenges, and opportunities. *IDN Media*. <https://cdn.idntimes.com/content-documents/indonesia-gen-z-report-2024.pdf>



- Jackson, D. A., & Edgar, S. (2019). Encouraging students to draw on work experiences when articulating achievements and capabilities to enhance employability. *Australian Journal of Career Development*, 28(1), 39–50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1038416218790571>
- Jackson, D.A. (2017). Using work-integrated learning to enhance career planning among business undergraduates. *Australian Journal of Career Development*, 26, 153 - 164.
- Kamaruddin, N., Wahab, A., & Harris, F. C., Jr. (2023). Enhancing talent development using AI-driven curriculum-industry integration. *Proceedings of the 7th Asia-Pacific International Conference on Quality of Life (AQoL2023)*, Bali, Indonesia, 377–386. <https://doi.org/10.21834/e-bpj.v8i26.5129>
- Marlita, D., Handayani, S., Perwitasari, E.P., Azis, M.R., & Hamonangan, Y. (2024). Socialization Applicant Tracking System (ATS) and ATS Curriculum Vitae for ITL Trisakti and General Students. *Asian Journal of Community Services*.
- Novaković, N., & Dražeta, L. (2024). Applicant Tracking System: A Powerful Recruiters' Tool. *Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference - Sinteza 2024*.
- Odili, P. O., Daudu, C. D., Adefemi, A., Ekemezie, I. O., & Usiagu, G. S. (2024). The impact of artificial intelligence on recruitment and selection processes in the oil and gas industry: A review. *Engineering Science & Technology Journal*, 5(2), 612–638. <https://doi.org/10.51594/estj/v5i2.836>
- Priyono, S., & Nankervis, A. (2020). Graduate work readiness in Indonesia: Challenges and opportunities. In *Developing the workforce in an emerging economy* (1st ed., p. 15). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429273353>
- PsicoSmart. (n.d.). The evolution of applicant tracking systems: Trends and future directions. Retrieved August 25, 2024, from <https://psico-smart.com/en/blogs/blog-the-evolution-of-applicant-tracking-systems-trends-and-future-directions-162424>
- Redi Pudyanti, A.A., Redioka, A.N., & Devana, V.T. (2022). Analyses Based on Theory of Capital Based Approach on Indonesian Graduate Employability. *ADI Journal on Recent Innovation (AJRI)*.
- Saini, H., & Tarkar, P. (2024). COVID-19: Its impact on recruitment, selection, and organizational performance. *African Journal of Biological Sciences*, 6(5), 9282–9299. <https://doi.org/10.48047/AFJBS.6.5.2024.9282-9299>
- Taylor, A. R., & Hooley, T. (2014). Evaluating the impact of career management skills module and internship programme within a university business school. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 42(5), 487–499. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2014.918934>
- TestGorilla. (2023). The state of skills-based hiring 2023. Retrieved from <https://www.testgorilla.com/skills-based-hiring/testgorilla-the-state-of-skills-based-hiring-report-2023.pdf>
- Uddin, M. (2021). Addressing employability challenges of business graduates in Bangladesh: Evidence from an emerging economy perspective. *Australian Journal of Career Development*, 30(2), 83–94. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1038416220986887>
- Waung, M., McAuslan, P., DiMambro, J. M., & Mie, goc', N. (2017). Impression management use in resumes and cover letters. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 32(6), 727–746. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-016-9470-9>
- Wilton, N. (2008). Business graduates and management jobs: An employability match made in heaven? *Journal of Education and Work*, 21(2), 143–158. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639080802080949>
- Yando, M., Barasa, L., & Simanjuntak, M.B. (2024). Integrating Practical Skills Into Multimodal Transportation Education In Indonesia. *International Journal of Educational Development*.
- Zeidan, S., & Bishnoi, M.M. (2020). An Effective Framework for Bridging the Gap between Industry and Academia.