

Graduates' Responses Regarding Communication Strategies of Private University Career Center

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Abstract—This research aims to give evaluation and input for the career center of a private university through the response from graduates regarding the communication strategies conducted by the career center in order to obtain the job for the graduates. The sub-focus used in this research is the graduates' responses to the three communication strategies conducted by the career center, namely job fair, tracer study, and website. This research used the qualitative approach with a case study method at Universitas Komputer Indonesia (UNIKOM) as a private university that has a career center. Informants were selected through the purposive technique, consisting of three informants, who were graduates of UNIKOM as a job fair participant, tracer study respondents, and website visitors. The results of the study indicate that graduates' respond regarding job fair or UNIKOM Career Days were quite helpful to provide job vacancy although the participating companies are considered limited for graduates of the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science. Graduates respond to tracer study as an activity that is not too useful so the benefits of filling out a tracer study need to be socialized. Graduates' respond regarding the UNIKOM Career Center website was clear and quite complete, but the appearance was still seen as monotonous and not so updated. The researcher concluded that the graduates' responses to the communication strategies conducted by the UNIKOM Career Center have been managed routinely and organized so that they were quite helpful to obtain job vacancies for the graduates.

Keywords—Response, Career Center, Graduates, Private University, Job Vacancy

I. INTRODUCTION

The career center is an institution found in the structure of higher education institutions that has the responsibility to confront graduates as job seekers with companies as users of labor. The importance of the existence of a career center in a university, evidenced by the Decision of Directorate General of Learning and Student Affairs Decree, Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education, Republic of Indonesia Number 212/B/SK/2017 regarding The Implementation of Higher Education as Career Centers Service and Advanced Career Centers Year 2017 with consideration that in order to facilitate prospective graduates of higher education to be able to compete in the labor market [1].

Another thing conducted by the Directorate General of Learning and Student Affairs to facilitate the development of career centers in higher education, their functions, and activities, is to organize a career center development system program. In addition, according to the Guidance Book of Career Center Second Edition, it is stated that there is a need

to encourage and strengthen career centers in several universities to help graduates obtain specific jobs or skills so they will not increase the burden of unemployment problem in Indonesia [2] as well as the need to initiate a system that can provide information to higher education institutions as the producer of graduates and also the Ministry of National Education as the responsibility for education in Indonesia to ensure that university graduates in Indonesia have suitable employment opportunities.

In fact, what happened in Indonesia contradicts with the statement above, because not all universities in Indonesia have Career Centers, including universities in Bandung City. Researchers found that in Bandung, until 2017, there were three public universities and 105 private universities [3]. The three public universities already have Career Center, however, there are still many private universities in Bandung that do not have career centers.

This is in line with the statement of the Guidance Book of Career Center Second Edition: "It is realized that the disparity and heterogeneity of higher education in Indonesia are very high so that the form, structure, type of activity and intensity are graded according to the situation and condition of the university concerned. This is also the case of the existence and function of the career center in higher education. Some universities have career centers with various functions that are running well but there are still many universities that have absolutely no career center in their structure. To further improve the relevance of higher education in the community and the working world, guidance is needed to improve the functions and activities of universities' career centers in Indonesia" [4].

Though the function of the existence of a career center in a university includes: "(1) Facilitate job seekers to get a job according to their talents, interests and skills; (2) Help companies as the labor user to provide and get a qualified, skilled and professional working world in accordance with the needs of the company; (3) Implement recruitment of employee through the job fair; (4) Reduce unemployment through the increasing of employment" [4].

That means, without career center, many private universities in Bandung cannot facilitate job seekers to get jobs; in other words, many of their graduates have to work on their own to obtain a job without assistance from the career center, for example, through the job fair. This is very unfortunate, considering there are stereotypes in Indonesia which state that public university graduates have better quality than private university graduates.

Universitas Komputer Indonesia (UNIKOM) is one of the private universities in Bandung that has a career center

called UNIKOM CDC (Career Development Center). Established in 2012, formerly managed by the Directorate of Assets, Governance, and Career Centers. The vision of the UNIKOM CDC is "to become the leading of development service center of career and entrepreneurship of higher education that supports national development and oriented towards the interests of society, nation, and state". The vision achieved through the following missions: (1) develop students through training to improve their abilities in the future career development and entrepreneurship; (2) conduct data collection and graduates tracking or tracer studies; (3) conduct recruitment, guidance, and career consultation; (4) establish partnerships with various government institutions and private companies, both in the national and international level [4].

To realize the vision and mission mentioned above, the UNIKOM CDC continues to develop. Evidently, starting in 2015, UNIKOM CDC began to implement a job expo or career day, which is usually scheduled after the graduation ceremony, so that it will be socialized at the time of graduation to the graduates. And also in 2015, UNIKOM CDC has an official website named cdc.UNIKOM.ac.id and career.UNIKOM.ac.id which is dedicated to all graduates or prospective graduates of UNIKOM by providing fast and up-to-date information, including about job recruitments. But since November 2018, the Directorate of Assets, Governance, and Career Centers has been changed to the Division of Guidance, Counseling, and Career Center.

After being established for six years, there is a big question that has not been answered, whether the UNIKOM CDC has been able to achieve or realize its vision, mission, and objectives? Because there are no studies related to answer this question. The researcher did not find any previous research related to the career center conducted specifically by the researcher, lecturer, or student of the Communication Science Department and also there is no previous research that strongly related to the research conducted. Only a few previous researches about career center found by researcher include:

1. The Implementation of CRM Application for Career Center at IBI Darmajaya Higher Education

Sri Karnila

Information System, Faculty of Computer Science, Informatics & Business Institute (IBI) Darmajaya Bandar Lampung (2012)

Research of information system through the development of CRM applications (software and hardware). Graduates data processing and company data are stages of business data collection to ensure more efficient communication with customers, which is in accordance with service transactions. The results of consolidating information about customers are graduates and companies' data, so they can determine the criteria for improving integrated services. This interaction provides recommendations for the improvement of labor distribution procedures, graduates and companies' data reports. This CRM application is an effort to increase continuous service to graduates, increasing graduates' loyalty. To show the graduates and companies about how seriously IBI Darmajaya handle their customers [6].

2. Development of Career Center System for the Counseling and Career Development Department of Universitas Esa Unggul

Andika Herdiana and Joko Dewanto

Faculty of Computer Science, Universitas Esa Unggul Jakarta (2013)

Research of information system through website development. This web-based career center registration system is expected to be able to help every student or job seeker to register easier, which can help in conducting an effective and efficient work. In the system, visitors can see the full information on job vacancies. With the web-based career center registration system, it is hoped that there will be no obstacles in the form of distance and time to register because it can be done anywhere with the help of the internet. The design of this application as a companion career center system that exists at the present. This application is designed by taking samples from the manual registration system, but in this career center system, the registration process is computerized [7].

Therefore, this research was conducted to determine graduates' responses to the strategies implemented by the UNIKOM CDC, especially job fair, tracer study, and website to achieve the goals of the UNIKOM CDC, namely (1) find out the absorption, process, and position of graduates in the working world through graduates' database produced by UNIKOM; (2) prepare graduates in accordance with the superior competencies needed in the working world that are able to compete both nationally and internationally and also having faith and fear of the Almighty God; (3) assist government programs in order to map and harmonize the needs of the working world with the higher education in Indonesia; (4) foster entrepreneurial interest and culture among UNIKOM students and graduates so they could be a successful entrepreneurs [6]. Or in other words, help UNIKOM graduates in obtaining the job, both as employees and entrepreneurs, and to face the competition with graduates of public universities and other private universities in Bandung City and all over Indonesia.

II. METHOD

This research was conducted with a qualitative approach. The method considered most appropriate for this research is a case study. Yin in Arifianto, "The object that can be appointed as a case is a contemporary one, which is ongoing. It can also have been taken place but still leaves a broad impact and influence on the community when the case study research is conducted" [8]. The contemporary phenomenon in this research is the phenomenon of the response from graduates regarding the communication strategies conducted by the career center in order to obtain a job for the graduates.

The purposive sampling technique used to determine the informant, which is a data source sampling technique with certain considerations. Through the purposive technique, the researcher set three informants, who were graduates of UNIKOM as job fair participant, tracer study respondents, and website visitors. The data collection techniques in this research are literature study, online data search, in-depth interviews, participant observation, and

documentation. To analyze data of this research, Miles, and Huberman in Sugiyono suggested that activities in qualitative data analysis were carried out interactively and continuously until complete so that the data was saturated, consisting of data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (verification) [9].

III. RESULTS

Graduates' Responses to Job Fair Organized by Private University Career Center in Order to Obtain Job for The Graduates

The results of the researcher's observations indicated that the UNIKOM CDC held job fairs (UNIKOM Career Days) starting in 2015, regularly, twice a year. UNIKOM Career Days are always held after the UNIKOM graduation, in the odd semester, this only lasts for a day, while in the even semester, it lasts for two days. But, starting from 2018, UNIKOM Career Days lasts for two days both in the odd semester and even semester. This activity does not charge fees (free) and not only for UNIKOM graduates but also for job seekers in general. The observation result also showed that UNIKOM Career Days used different themes each year.

UNIKOM graduate who was once participants in the UNIKOM Career Days argued that this activity is quite helpful in getting information about job vacancies. Graduates usually obtain information about of the UNIKOM Career Days from the announcement at the time of graduation with the aim that all graduates of UNIKOM know about it. In addition, the communication media used to socialize the UNIKOM Career Days is social media, such as Instagram and also website.

The message conveyed to graduates through UNIKOM Career Days received a positive response because in addition to the job fair there was also seminar in accordance with the theme determined by the UNIKOM CDC. Seminar speakers usually coming from quite large companies.

Unfortunately, the response of graduates regarding companies who participate in the UNIKOM Career Days is considered to provide more vacancies for graduates of the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science and there are only a few companies that provide vacancies for graduates from social sciences such as communication science.

The researcher found that the UNIKOM CDC always conducted data collection or monitoring regarding the number of graduates who obtained jobs from the UNIKOM Career Days. Of course, this should be appreciated because thus the UNIKOM CDC knows that the participating companies of UNIKOM Career Days really recruit.

Graduates' Responses about Tracer Study Conducted by Private University Career Centers in Order to Obtain Job for The Graduates

Another activity held by the UNIKOM CDC on an ongoing basis is the tracer study. This activity obtained through the site survey. UNIKOM.ac.id and held in order to improve the communication between graduates and to find out the performance of graduates in the working world. That is, the existence of a tracer study provides indirect benefits to graduates to get jobs. This is because, through graduates who fill in the tracer study questionnaire, the university can get an estimate of the number of graduates who have worked or choose entrepreneurship. As a form of

appreciation for the graduates who have filled out the tracer study questionnaire, UNIKOM CDC draws lots to provide attractive prizes such as smartphones. This has been done by UNIKOM CDC for the past two years, 2017 and 2018.

The researcher observed the low participation of graduates in filling out tracer study, so besides giving prizes, since 2017, UNIKOM CDC applies rules for graduates who have passed more than two years and intend to legalize their diploma, must fill out a tracer study questionnaire first. This rule is socialized through Circular Number 058/DIR-TKCC/UNIKOM/VII/2017.

Generally, graduates don't know that the following tracer study can be a measure of the absorption of UNIKOM graduates in the working world, the match between work and knowledge learned in college, and also as an assessment for UNIKOM graduates by the companies that employ them.

Graduates get the information about the existence of tracer studies from several media, namely e-mail, website, and social media. The researcher concluded that UNIKOM CDC was quite aggressive in socializing the tracer study.

The responses of graduates regarding the messages conveyed through the tracer study were also positive. But the results of observations by the researcher regarding the tracer study showed that the low participation of graduates in filling out the tracer study is due to the complexity and too many entries in the tracer study questionnaire. There are differences in the steps for filling out questionnaires for graduates who work as employees and graduates who choose to become entrepreneurs. So that graduates who become entrepreneurs still have to fill out a tracer study questionnaire. This is another homework for UNIKOM CDC to socialize that graduates who fill out the questionnaire not only work as employees but also entrepreneurs.

Another finding regarding the low participation of graduates in filling out the tracer study is because of the lack of benefits felt by graduates by filling out the tracer study questionnaire. This means that graduates do not know that by completing a tracer study, graduates can find out the performance (assessment of performance) that comes from the boss or the company leader, where the graduate works. Because in the last step of the tracer study, the graduate must fill in the name of the boss or the leader and their contact.

In connection with this, the shortcoming of tracer study according to graduates is that sometimes their leaders are often not willing to fill in assessments of graduate performance. Though the assessment of graduate users is very useful for the accreditation of study programs and higher education institutions.

Graduates' Responses on Private University Career Center Websites in Order to Obtain Job for The Graduates

The homepage of UNIKOM CDC website states that the website is dedicated to all of UNIKOM students who have graduated or will soon graduate. By providing fast and up-to-date information. UNIKOM CDC website continues to be developed to help prepare graduates according to the competencies needed in the working world, to find out the absorption, process, and position of graduates in the working world so as to continue to be able to assist

government programs in mapping and harmonizing the needs of the working world with higher education in Indonesia.

Graduate's responses regarding the UNIKOM CDC website as a whole were quite good, but still not interesting enough for them to open the site regularly. The research informant already knows about the existence of the UNIKOM CDC website because, during college, the research informant was actively joining the organization.

Graduate's responses regarding the appearance of UNIKOM CDC website looked monotonous, which would be more interesting and more pleasant to visit if the appearance could be designed like the main website of UNIKOM (UNIKOM.ac.id). Based on the results of observations, it showed that certain pages on UNIKOM CDC website are poorly managed so that it did not look organized, for example, article pages. When a visitor intends to see an announcement regarding UNIKOM Career Days, there is no text, there are only images whose width exceeds the width of the content column.

Graduate's responses regarding messages and information delivered through the UNIKOM Career Center website are clear and quite complete in providing information about job vacancies. But unfortunately, many companies that cooperate with UNIKOM CDC and listed on the website are considered unfamiliar. There are only a few that well known.

Just like UNIKOM Career Days, job vacancies listed on the website are also intended for graduates of the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science.

The results of observations regarding the shortcoming of the UNIKOM CDC website were not too updated or not in accordance with the statement on the website's home page. Because the website is not updated daily or weekly, but based on the information that will be shared. So if in a few weeks there is no information to share, the website will not experience renewal or update.

IV. DISCUSSION

Surahkkamat opinion about the response: "Response greatly determines how individuals relate to their environment. The more functioning the response is, the more individuals interact with the environment. Experience shows that the type and level of someone's needs will greatly influence the type and intensity of their responses" [10].

So there needs to be a response from graduates regarding the communication strategies that the career center conducts in order to obtain a job for the graduates. This research observed graduates' responses to the three communication strategies conducted by UNIKOM CDC, namely, job fair, tracer study, and website.

UNIKOM Career Days is referred to as the job fair exhibition or also known as job expo, is a channel or physical facility that gathering of business actors to promote institutions, types of businesses, and especially jobs available at the institution. Job seekers visit this activity with the intention of applying for and seeking employment information. In practice, at a job fair exhibition, there can also be seminar activities, short training, company exposures, recruitment, and interviews. The job fair

exhibition can also be integrated with scholarship and entrepreneurship exhibitions. The job fair exhibition is one of the best-known career center activities.

The researcher observed that the annual theme of UNIKOM Career Days is always related to future careers. Unfortunately, the response of graduates regarding companies who participate in the UNIKOM Career Days is considered to provide more vacancies for graduates of the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science, and there are only a few companies that provide vacancies for graduates from social sciences such as communication science. This might because of the image of UNIKOM as a campus with achievements in robotics and rockets, so companies who joining the UNIKOM Career Days are dominated by companies that engaged in technology. It means, one of the homework that must be done by the UNIKOM CDC is to have more partnerships with companies engaged in social, legal, literary, design, communication, etc.

One way to dig up information related to the transition from college to work is to carry out a study called a tracer study. Tracer study is a study of graduates of higher education institutions. Other terms that are also often used are "Graduate Surveys", "Alumni Researches", and "Follow-up Study" [11].

UNIKOM CDC held a tracer study or Alumni Survey activity in order to improve the communication between graduates and to know the performance of graduates in the working world. UNIKOM CDC guarantees the confidentiality of data that has been filled in the questionnaire. Where the questionnaire is valuable data for UNIKOM which will be used as input for the development of UNIKOM. As a form of appreciation for graduates who have filled out the tracer study questionnaire, UNIKOM CDC draws lots to provide attractive prizes such as smartphones. This has been done by the UNIKOM CDC for two years, 2017 and 2018 [12].

In the communication process, responses don't just happen. A response is born through several stages of the process that occur in a communicant. This process is interpersonal communication that occurs to respond to a stimulus. Bulaeng in Wulansari explains if the stimulus received from the communicator to the communicant will go through an introduction process. At this stage the stimulus will be recognized by the communicant, then proceed to the stage of reasoning and feeling. This stage of stimulus experiences reasoning which is a process to test whether the rationale is accepted or not. This process involves the feeling of the communicant in choosing whether the stimulus is suitable and accepted by him. If the stimulus is suitable, then a response will be born which is a form of feedback (feedback) on the stimulus given [13].

In this research, the stimulus received in the form of the UNIKOM CDC website will go through a process of introduction by graduates by visiting the website. Then proceed to the stage of reasoning and feeling. UNIKOM CDC website then experiences reasoning, namely a process to test whether rational is accepted or not by graduates. This process involves the feeling of graduates in choosing whether the UNIKOM CDC website is suitable and accepted by itself. If the website is deemed suitable, then a response will be born which is a form of feedback.

Graduates' responses regarding messages and information delivered through the UNIKOM CDC website would be better if the UNIKOM CDC is able to share seminar material held at UNIKOM Career Days through the website. So graduates who are not present at the UNIKOM Career Days can get the seminar material. The contents of the website are still dominated by announcements and there is no material related to how to get a job or other things that can be prepared by graduates when they will join the working world or succeed after graduating from UNIKOM.

In the Guidance Book of Career Center Second Edition published by the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Directorate General of Higher Education, Directorate of Learning and Student Affairs in 2012, it was stated that Career Centers are institutions within the university structure that conducted the function of gathering the user of labor (company). In the guidebook, it is also stated that there are encouragement and reinforcement to Career Centers in several universities to be able to help graduates obtain certain jobs or skills so they will not increase the burden of unemployment in Indonesia. In addition, to provide information to higher education institutions producing graduates and the Ministry of National Education as responsible for education in order to ensure that university graduates in Indonesia have suitable employment opportunities.

As stated before, career center in higher education institutions are included in the special employment exchange group, with the following functions: "(1) Facilitates job seekers to get a job according to their talents, interests and skills; (2) Helps companies as the labor user to provide and get a qualified, skilled and professional working world in accordance with the needs of the company; (3) Implements recruitment of employee through the job fair; (4) Reduces unemployment through the increasing of employment" [4].

The career center at a university serves as a bridge to gather the information needs of the working world needed by universities and to answer the challenges of the working world. Developments in the working world occur very quickly in accordance with the dynamics of the industry which absorb the most labor force of university graduates.

Higher education is sometimes considered slow and gives the impression of being less concerned in responding to the dynamics of the industry. One presumption that arises, university graduates who are unprepared or less competent in certain positions make the company must re-invest in the form of training and debriefing to meet the required competencies. This assumption is not necessarily true, but higher education institutions are required to always be able to answer the challenges given by trying to be a bridge between what is needed in the working world and the knowledge provided to students to become graduates who are able to get jobs easily.

In addition to learning to acquire knowledge that is specific to the field of study, students need to have adequate knowledge of the field of work to be pursued and the various competencies needed in the job. At present, not all universities conduct adequate career coaching for students and graduates. The density of curricular learning activities, made career coaching activities neglected.

Brunner and Goodman in Rakhmat explained: "Through a study proves that the social value of an object depends on the social concept of the person giving the values" [14]. So through this research, it can be seen that the social value of the strategies conducted by UNIKOM CDC in order to obtain the job for the graduates depends on the social concept of graduates as people who provide values.

In the book of Communication Planning & Strategy Revised Edition, Hafied Cangara said: "Strategy comes from Classical Greek, namely Stratos which means army and agein which means to lead. Thus, the strategy was intended to lead the army. Then there is also the word strategos, which means leading the army at the top. So the strategy is a military concept that can be interpreted as The Art of War General or the best design to win the war" [15].

The etymological definition of strategy is then developed by practitioners, including in handling communication problems, especially in relation to the use of available communication resources to achieve goals. UNIKOM CDC must realize that the selection of strategies is an important step that requires careful handling in communication planning, because if the chosen strategy is wrong, then the results obtained are also fatal, causing loss, time, material, and energy.

The other activities that can be done by the UNIKOM CDC based on observations, classified as not routine or not being managed optimally, as follows:

1. Training

Training is a non-formal short education that can provide certain skills or skills expected.

The types of training that can be offered by career center include soft skills, technical skills (application skills), job application letters and curriculum vitae (resume), interview techniques, and personality enhancements. Observations of the researcher, UNIKOM CDC have never held training specifically, where the training that was informed through UNIKOM CDC website was actually held by companies that collaborated with the UNIKOM CDC. So that UNIKOM CDC only facilitates or delivers information about the training.

2. Internship

It is the activity of students or prospective graduates to gain experience working in an institution that is different from work practices that are usually conducted by students as part of the curriculum. Of course, internship activities are not activities that are under the management of the UNIKOM CDC, but each study program as part of the curriculum.

3. Campus Recruitment

Is the activity of selecting and receiving labor conducted by companies that are opening job vacancies. In general, recruitment activities on campus are conducted by companies in collaboration with career center with the aim of obtaining certain university graduates. This has been conducted by UNIKOM CDC and is informed through its website but there is no fixed schedule or time. In other words this activity is incidental.

4. Career Counseling

Unesco mentions that career counseling includes: Helping individuals to understand broader abilities, in terms of interests, values, abilities and match

personality; Connect students with other sources so that they understand more about job and occupation; Involve students in the decision-making process so that they can later choose a career that suits their interests, values, abilities and matches their personality; Helping them to organize their own careers (including managing career transitions and balancing the various responsibilities that are undertaken) and also being lifelong learning figures within the framework of professional development.

As stated, based on the results of research observations, the researcher found that the response from UNIKOM CDC was slow for graduates who intended to have counseling by sending an e-mail to cdc@UNIKOM.ac.id. UNIKOM CDC can recruit a special staff as a career counselor and actually provide a schedule of counseling to graduates.

5. Career Promotion and Promotion of Career Centers: Targets and Facilities

Career center socialization is the introduction of a career center program to prospective graduates while the promotion is the introduction of career center activities outside of the university. As far as the researcher's observations, there has been no introduction from UNIKOM CDC program to the prospective graduates because UNIKOM CDC routinely introduces UNIKOM CDC program to graduates only one day before graduation and at the graduation ceremony itself. Likewise with promotion is the introduction of UNIKOM CDC activities outside the UNIKOM has not been done directly or focused. Where UNIKOM CDC only introduces UNIKOM CDC activities outside UNIKOM through UNIKOM Career Days posters that are distributed outside UNIKOM besides website and also social media.

V. CONCLUSION

Job fair, tracer study and website are strategies that run and managed routinely by UNIKOM CDC and organized in order to obtain a job for the graduates. The three parts of the strategy as a whole received quite positive responses and appreciation from graduates. Although there are still shortcomings. But the researcher concluded that negative responses regarding these shortcomings from graduates could be used as evaluations and inputs to make the UNIKOM CDC better in obtaining the job for the graduates.

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