

What English education undergraduate students need for career maturity and development

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ABSTRACT

This reviews article reflects on the career uncertainty issue on English Education Undergraduate Students (EEUS). It tries to investigate the EEUS needs to gain their career maturity and the possible strategy which can be performed by university or faculty to reduce the gap of the career maturity and career development of the EEUS. There are five problems which caused their career anxiety; a) there is a lack of job vacancies, b) not all the private companies want to hire English education graduates, c) there is limited job formation for English education major in the government sector, d) there is a big number English education graduates who seek the job, and e) everyone may acquire English language skills. Most of the issues are caused by external factors then affect the self-efficacy of the EEUS. In this case, career intervention is necessary to be performed. Based on the article review, the faculty may provide career assistance for EEUS to improve their career maturity and career development.

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1. Introduction

Attending college or universities is expected to expand the career prospect for undergraduate students. It is a place to acquire further knowledge for the student's future career. Therefore, Career prospect is one of the considerations on choosing the major for the students. Most universities include the career prospect of each major to attract prospective comers. Thus, university or college is seen as the place of career development for the students. On the other hand, nowadays, universities face certain problems related to the career development of the students. Hidayat & Prabowo (2019) mention that undergraduate students experience career uncertainty. They write that about 87% of undergraduate students undergo a mis-chosen major after entering the university. Quoted from Kompas.com (2010), in higher education of Indonesia, there is around 40% of undergraduate students drop out from university in the first year because of the mis-chosen major phenomenon. Moreover, on October 26th, 2021, during a university visit to North Sumatra University, the Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Makarim stated that 80% of the undergraduate of Indonesia has job disparity with what they studied in the university. Thus, those cases show that attending university drags undergraduate students to another level of job uncertainty whereas, in fact, the university is the place which is expected to build their career path.

Furthermore, in this article, the researcher focuses on English education undergraduate students (EEUS). The researcher concerns that the EEUS experience different levels of career uncertainty. Basically, the curriculum goal of the English education department is for preparing an English teacher

candidate who has pedagogical competence to teach English contextually. Zamhari (2020) describe the career prospect for EEUS, such as English teacher, translator or interpreter, tour guide, content writer, editor or proof-reader, employee, reviewer, etc. Therefore, the university prepares the EEUS to acquire the skills for the career prospect. On the other hand, in the online forum (Quora, 2020), one of the English education graduates mention that career barriers for the English education graduates are a) there is a lack of job vacancies, b) not all the private companies want to hire English education graduates, c) there is limit job formation for English education major in the government sector, d) there is a big number English education graduates who seek the job, and e) everyone may acquire English language skills. Thus, even though the EEUS is prepared for acquiring the right track of the career prospect as mentioned before, the phenomena of career barrier may drag the EEUS to face career uncertainty.

Moreover, based on the career barrier above, there may be a gap or missing step in building the career path of the EEUS. Therefore, the researcher tries to point out; a) what does the EEUS need to gain their career maturity? and b) how can university or faculty reduce the gap of the career maturity and career development of the EEUS? It is addressed to fulfil the needs and demands of EEUS to build their career path. The researcher will discuss and analyze the problem based on reviewing some literature and case phenomena in different countries. Therefore, by this article, it is expected to increase the hiring rate and reduce the job uncertainty of the English education graduates.

2. Literature reviews

2.1. Career development

It has been common in society that pursuing a career is very challenging, especially for young people. Career development will become a life span issue in the term of both internal factors e.g., maintaining professional competence, self-motivation, knowledge, skills, and abilities, also the external factor e.g., work intervention, retraining, outplacement, new technology, job demand and pressures, and colleagues (Sterns & Dorsett, 1994). Developing a career is not started the same as the job starts. It is set up when deciding a certain education and training or even at the early exploratory stage during high school (Kosine & Lewis, 2008). That is the reason why elementary students have been taught about kinds of occupations at an early age to create what kind of future they desire.

Career development is a process not becoming the final target. Kosine & Lewis (2008) state that developing a career is a self-concept exploration toward occupation to acquire work-related skills and ability. The undergraduate students take the initial step for starting their career path by studying in the university. It encourages the students to undergo the knowledge for future stability in society (Boulton & Lucas, 2008). Therefore, college or university is one of the long paths to construct career maturity for undergraduate students.

Lent et al., (1994) describe that the career development process is interrelated between an individual, contextual factor, and learning/experiential factors which later mentioned as the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). SCCT develops the theoretical foundation on the process of career development by attempting self-efficacy construct and career recognition. It shows that personal interest development, career choice-decision, and education performance have a connection with the career development process. Hsu et al., (2021) add self-regulated motivation and behavior may perceive career maturity. Besides, self-evaluation is also effective in career prediction and career decision-making (Shen et al., 2021). McMahon (2005) develops the System Theory Framework (STF) which defines the factor framework which influences career development. He defines two factors that impact career development, internal factor and external factor which are shown in Figure 1 below. Thus, in the process of career development for undergraduate students, the factors which should be pointed out are the personal factor (e.g., self-efficacy, motivation, interest), contextual factor (environment).

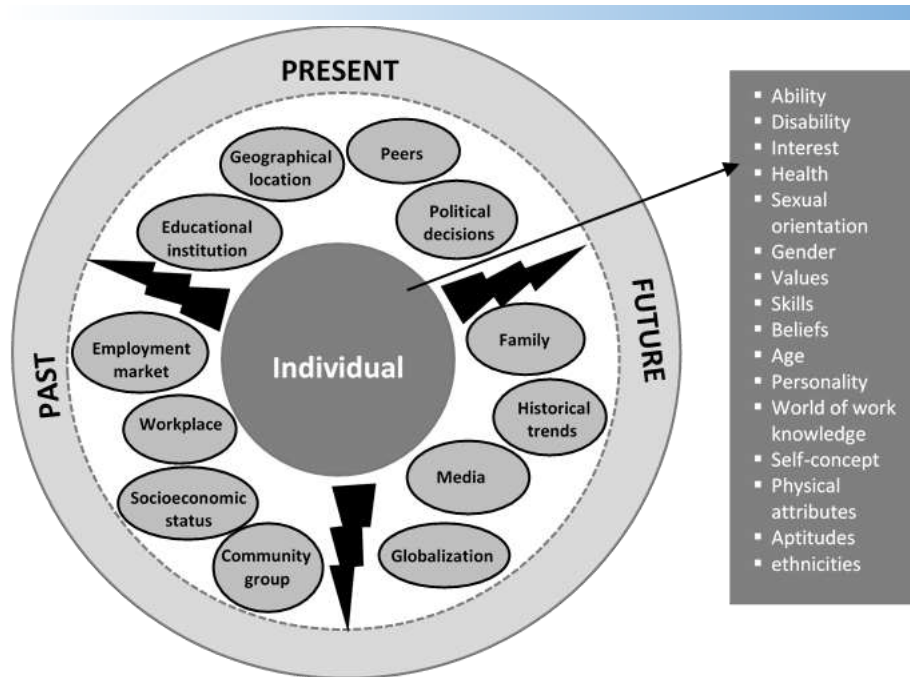


Fig. 1. System Theory Framework (STF) of Career Development

2.2. Career maturity

Setting up the career goal requires a feasible career vision to reach career maturity. Career maturity refers to career readiness, age-appropriateness, and career decision-making of young people (Naidoo, 1998). It can be perceived as an individual who has acquired the educational and vocational sufficiency and positive attitude on career decision making. Career maturity is important to make an effective career decision and successful career plan (Talib et al., 2015). Creed & Patton (2003) add that career maturity can be assessed through Career Development Knowledge (CDK) and Career Development Attitude (CDA). Besides, the potential problems which can affect low career maturity are missed in making career decisions and set the wrong career path (Hidayat & Prabowo, 2019). Therefore, setting the career plan indicates the crucial stages in the career development process which shows career readiness or career maturity.

Career readiness indicates that young people have decision-making and career planning competence (Schlesinger et al., 2021). Some factors which interfere with the complexity of career decision-making and career planning are the job environment including rapid technology development, social relationship, etc (Callanan et al., 2017). Hiebert et al., (2010) mention that purposeful career planning consists of five components, 1) career preparation, 2) tools and resources, 3) competence and strategy, 4) facility, and 5) consistency. Those five components are essential for young people to set up the life career-planning. Moreover, self-confidence is also one of the factors which affect optimal career preparation (Noviati & Nu'man, 2020).

Furthermore, the phenomenon of career uncertainty challenges young people in the worldwide. In fact, career development programs have been started to involve in the career preparation for young people in some countries. Hiebert et al., (2010) explain that career guidance course has been developed in Finland, especially for polytechnical institutions. It has a positive impact on decreasing the case of program changing and increasing the number of student completion. In Japanese universities, career development skills training is a new trend for supporting the career maturity of Ph.D. students and graduates (Saitoh, 2012). The program is initiated as 'transferable skills' to improve the professional development of young researchers or doctoral programs. Besides, the Japanese government also had been developed some projects e.g., Kagakugijutsu Kankei Jinzaino Career Path Tayouka Sokushin Jigyo or called Career Path Project, Innovation Soshutsu Wakate KenkyuJinzai Yosei Jigyo or Innovation Project for Young Researcher, Next-Generation fellowship, etc. Moreover, the Ministry of Education of Australia also has been developed Work Integrated Learning (WIL) since 2015 (Ministry of Education of Australia, 2019). This project is intended to build the career readiness of students. It contains the career preparation activities, such as internships and work placement, industry

projects, fieldwork, and work simulations in Australian universities. Then, the Employer Satisfaction Survey and Graduate Outcomes Survey in 2018 resulted a positive increasing the employment number of undergraduates after the completion. There are about 72,9% of undergraduates hired in full-time employment within four months. Therefore, the career development program indicates the increasing career maturity in some countries.

2.3. Threats for the English education students and graduates

Finding a job is a common habit for graduates after completing their education in the university. Their life status changes from a student to a 'job seeker' or 'job maker'. It leads them to anxiety conditions during finding a job (Isnaini & Lestari, 2015). Nurjanah (2020) mentions that the anxiety which appears in the fresh graduates is affected by the unemployment number of the alumni and low self-efficacy and self-confidence. Besides, getting a rejection is also one of the factors that increase anxiety among the graduates. Therefore, the phenomenon is one of the cases of career uncertainty that is caused by the career unreadiness of the graduates.

The phenomenon of career uncertainty also impacts English education students and graduates. The researcher summarizes that there are two main factors which become a threat for English education students and graduates in their career, policy factor, and environment factor. The changeable policy of the government gives a significant threat to the graduates. In 2013, Kurikulum 2013 '2013 Curriculum' has been introduced by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia. In Kurikulum 2013, English subject has been removed from the subject list for elementary education (Kementrian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan RI, 2013). Alfarisy (2021) states that English subject teacher in elementary schools is transferred to teach other subjects different from their specialty. Besides, in the recent curriculum, the learning hour of English subject at the senior high school level is reduced to only 2 hours/week. In addition, for recruiting school teachers, in 2021, the Indonesian government announced PPPK (Pegawai Pemerintah dengan Perjanjian Kerja 'contract government officer') program to substitute PNS (Pegawai Negeri Sipil 'Official Public Servant') program. PPPK program requires a certain teaching experience duration which is difficult for fresh graduates and a Teacher Professional Education Certificate (Sertifikat Pendidikan Profesi Guru) which requires the graduates to take another one or two years of teacher professional education. Disas (2017) adds that this program takes high cost which causes the graduates tend to have a lack of interest in attending the program. Therefore, those situations narrow down the job formation for the English education students and graduates which causes career uncertainty.

Moreover, instability environment situation is the other factor which raises the career uncertainty for English education students and graduates. Nowadays, the world faces a COVID-19 pandemic which affects all of the life sectors, health, education, economy, politic, social, etc. Quoted to Thomas (2020), the phenomenon of the difficulty of finding a job is increasing during the pandemic. The number of job vacancies was declining within five months. The data of Indonesia Statistics Information Centre wrote the number of online job vacancies in January was about 12,168 whereas only 3,726 advertisements in May. Furthermore, Open Unemployment Rate (Tingkat Pengangguran Terbuka) in August 2020 increased 1.84% compared to August 2019 (Indonesia Statistics Information Centre, 2020). There were 2,56 million people was freed from work during the pandemic. It is the other threat for English education students and graduates for starting their life careers. Thus, this career uncertainty will interrupt their career development, especially for those who have low career readiness and career immaturity.

3. Discussion and analysis

Like the raising of the phenomenon of job uncertainty, all the factors which may affect low career readiness on English education students and graduates need to be concerned especially during the pandemic situation. Zwagery (2020) states that during the pandemic, 88% of fresh graduates are anxious in facing working life. It will be more challenging for young people, especially for a fresh graduate.

Therefore, in this article, the issue will be discussed based on the case phenomenon by using articles review. The researcher took some testimonies of English education graduates about their career life after completing their study on Quora (2020), an online discussion forum. One English education graduate writes,

[translated] After my undergraduate thesis final defence, I applied for a job in English private courses then I got one to kill the time before graduation, but I felt a bit purposeless. 3 months after the graduation, I went to an English village, Pare, to increase my speaking skill. I kept looking for job vacancies but, it is difficult to find a private company that wants to hire English education graduates. I was frustrated. My parent told me not to take an English education major, you can learn English by yourself. (Quora, 2020)

From the quotations above, English education graduate is struggling to plan their career. It indicates that a) there is a lack of job vacancies, b) not all the private companies want to hire English education graduates, c) there is limited job formation for English education, and d) everyone may acquire English language skills. Moreover, others said that,

[translated] during the pandemic, I quit my job. Then, I decided to register for PNS (Pegawai Negeri Sipil 'Official Public Servant') selection as English teacher, but it substituted to the PPPK (Pegawai Pemerintah dengan Perjanjian Kerja 'contract government officer'). I was desperate because PPPK requires teaching experience at two years, a Teacher Professional Education certificate (PPG) which is expensive, or for an honorary teacher. (Quora, 2020)

Thus, the statement shows the anxiety of the English education graduates. That case gives a hint that governmental policy can be one of the factors the career uncertainty for English education graduates. In addition, other carrier barriers can be seen from the quotation below.

[translated] I am an English education graduate. I work freelance teacher now. It is hard to find a settled job nowadays. It is because there were already so many graduates of English education. It means that we need to struggle with others to get a job. Besides, the variety of job vacancies is limited. (Quora, 2020)

Based on the quotation, it can be referred that there is limited job formation for English education majors in the government sector. Besides, there is a big number of English education graduates who seek a job. In 2020, there are about 1,33 million undergraduate students who were graduated (Indonesia Secretariat Directorate General of Higher Education, 2020).

Therefore, those quotations show that there is irregular career planning of English education graduates. They tend to blank about what to do and where to go after graduation which is career immaturity. The English education graduates tend to apply for all the job vacancies which they found after graduation. It may become an issue for the career development of English education undergraduate students.

Evaluating the appearing issue in Indonesia toward the career development of English education graduates, EEUS needs particular guidance about what to do and how to do it for being confident about their career plan. As stated by McMahan (2005) about the influences factor on career development, it is necessary to analyze at which sector can be dug in to prepare EEUS being ready for their career. The possible strategy can be started from the educational institution as a place to prepare their career such as providing career guidance. Undergraduate students show career unreadiness when they are not able to prepare their career well, start new career paths, and uncertain career decision-making, the career intervention is necessary (Grier-Reed & Skaar, 2010). Kleckner & Butz (2021) say that recommunication on their career preparation may help undergraduate students to improve their career maturity. Hidayat & Prabowo (2019) state providing career guidance has a positive impact on students' career maturity. Besides, It leads to better performance in developing young people's careers (Triandani & Anggriani, 2015). Therefore, Career intervention by the universities is significant to provide career guidance for the EEUS.

An innovative concept of career development considers initiating service, contextual program, career professionalism, and cross-sector exploring as a significant part to improve career readiness (Kettunen, 2021). Taking initiative service to boost career maturity is necessary for developing the EEUS career. Talib et al. (2015) mention that a career intervention program can encourage self-

motivation and self-efficacy of the target program. Besides, the intervention must adjust to the external factor e.g., environmental situation to respond to the rapid changes to make suitable career decisions (Callanan et al., 2017). Wessel et al. (2003) add that the intervention on career planning, such as Carer Success Centre/Club, shows high effectivity. Career intervention can assist undergraduate students to connect their career and academic field. Moreover, Schlesinger et al. (2021) imply the future practices for career intervention from the faculty perspective. They can be a) faculty as the career group center; b) providing career resources to larger career decisions; and c) providing career assistance for career conversations. Thus, it can be identified that career intervention can be the way to improve the career maturity of EEUS.

4. Conclusion

Career development has been concerned with the social issue, especially for young people. In Indonesia, most undergraduate students experience career disparity as stated by the Minister of Education and Culture on October 26th, 2021. Moreover, in the case of EEUS, some factors cause career anxiety, policy factor and environmental factor. The changing policy and the pandemic situation are the main threats that cause the career uncertainty of the EEUS. Based on the testimonies of the graduates of the English Education program, they mention that they face problems in their career life. The researcher concludes that there are five main issues, a) there is a lack of job vacancies, b) not all the private companies want to hire English education graduates, c) there is limited job formation for English education major in the government sector, d) there is a big number English education graduates who seek the job, and e) everyone may acquire English language skills. Those problems indicate that EEUS performs career immaturity and career unreadiness.

Moreover, most of the mentioned issues are related to the environmental factors. As stated by McMahon (2005) the external factor may affect personal development on their career preparation. Career intervention needs to be performed for EEUS to help their career maturity. Some countries, such as Finland, Australia, and Japan, have developed career development programs in higher education which shows the significant result on career readiness of the students. In the context of the EEUS case, to reduce the gap of career maturity and career development, the faculty or department may provide a career assistant which can perform career conversations for EEUS. Therefore, in the future, it increases the hiring rate and reduce the job uncertainty of EEUS.

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